Vol.2

ROKUDA NOBORU

F
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F

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FLEDGLING

F

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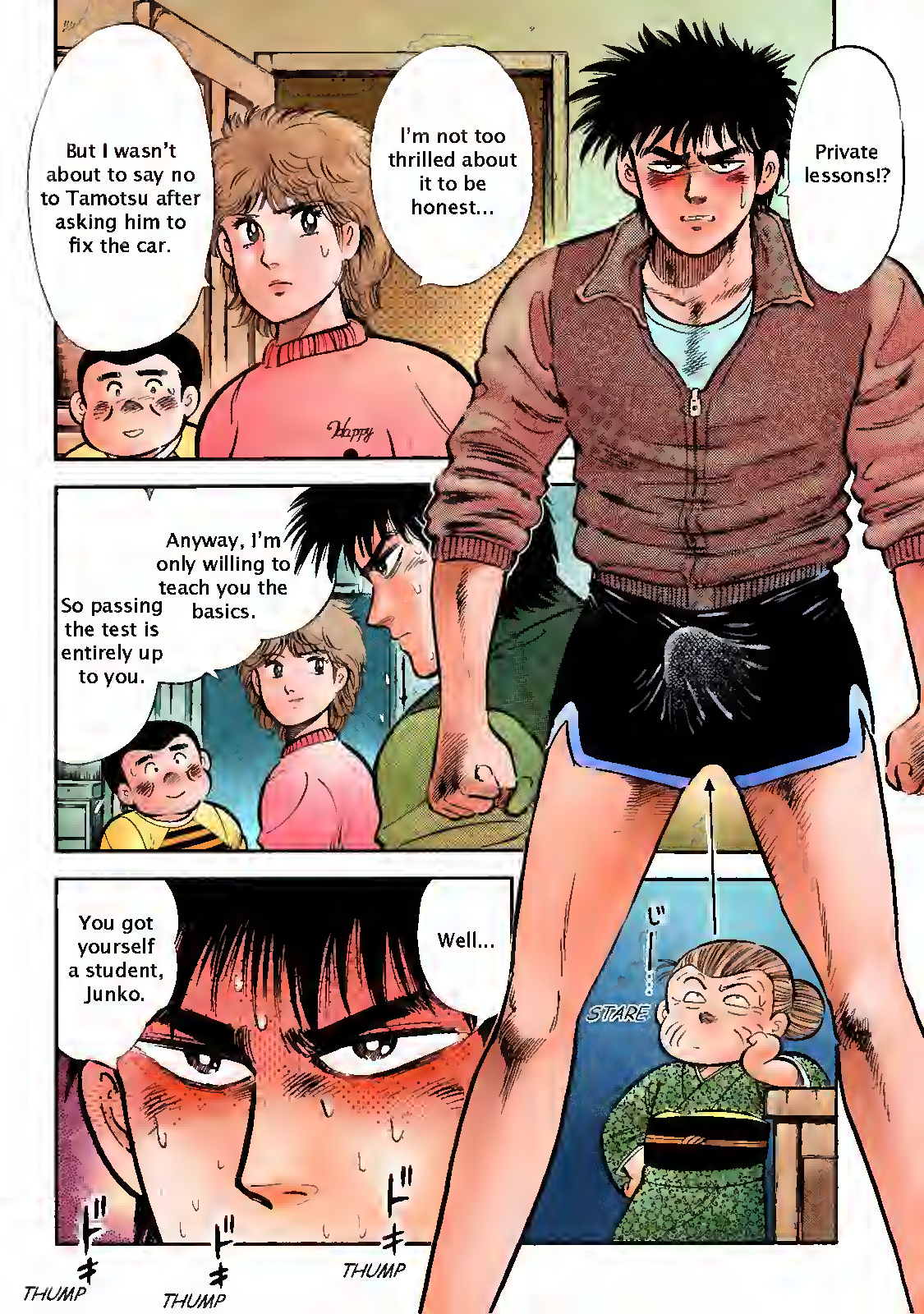
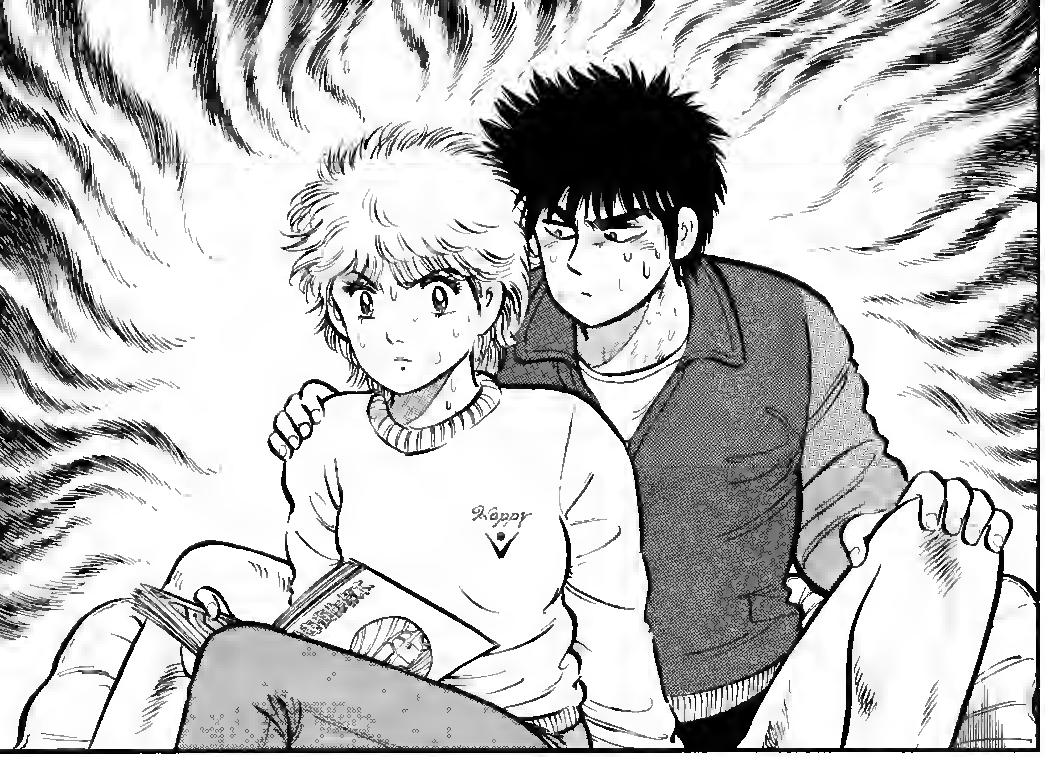
Chapter 1: Field Practice
Chapter 2: First Ride
Chapter 3: On Hold
Chapter 4: Full Face
Chapter 5: Fledgling
Chapter 6: Major Malfunction
Chapter 7: Obstacles
Chapter 8: Mad Brawl
Chapter 9: The Pledge
Chapter 10: Fellowship

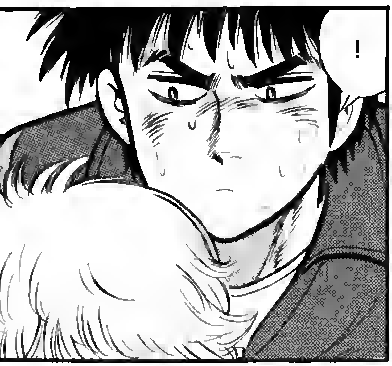
Chapter 1:
Field Practice


But I wasn't about to say no to Tamotsu after asking him to fix the car.
I'm not too thrilled about it to be honest...
Private lessons!?
Anyway, I'm only willing to teach you the basics.
So passing the test is entirely up to you.
You got yourself a student, Junko.
Well...
STARE
ドキ
THUMP
ドキ
THUMP
ドキ
THUMP

RUSH
ずん
Gunma ...
TAK
Great. Let's get started in my room.
I'm off today, so I can give you a thorough lesson on safe driving.
Just go!
Go to the bath-room.
Go to the bathroom and... snap out of it!
We don't wanna ruin this great opportunity with anything weird.
...
...
バターン
SLAM

Come in.
GHIO
Have a seat.
Happy
Okay.
Let's see ...
FLIP




!

I despise you...
...from the bottom of my heart!

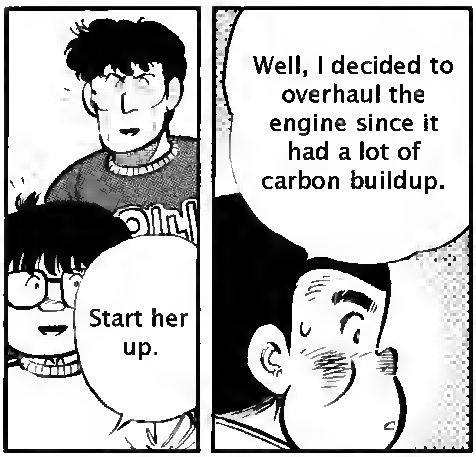
Oh yeah, there's one thing I'd like to make clear before we get started.

Always keep that in mind, okay?

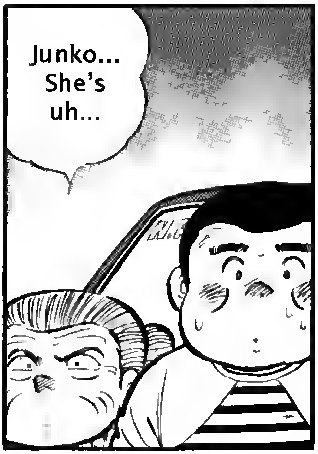
Never forget this.

SCRAPE
SCRAPE
Worried?
Who's worried?
If anything happens, we'll hear it right away.
Junko is a strong woman.
And her room is on the first floor...
There's nothing to worry about. Really.
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
Heh heh... Just a cat.
SSSINK
FWOOSH
MEOW
THUMP

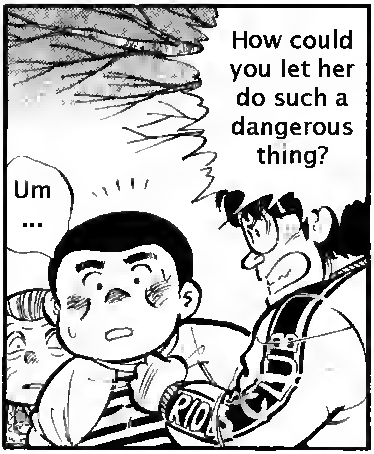
(1) Intersections, crosswalks, cyclist crossing zones, railroad crossings, streetcar tracks...
Next! Article 44 of the Road Traffic Law covers places you're not allowed to stop or park.
...near the top of a hill, tunnels, steep slopes...
We're back.
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE

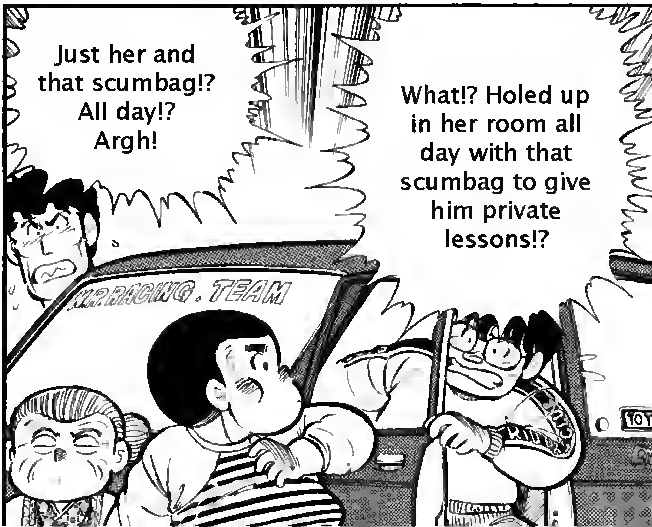

Start her up.
Well, I decided to overhaul the engine since it had a lot of carbon buildup.

How's it looking, Tamotsu?
...


Junko... She's uh...

I don't believe it! Where's Junko?
...
Wow! It's like a new engine!
VAVROOM


How could you let her do such a dangerous thing?
Um ...


Just her and that scumbag!? All day!? Argh!
What!? Holed up in her room all day with that scumbag to give him private lessons!?

What's going on out here?
Junko! You're okay!
Ha ha, of course I am.
Gunma?
...
Because...so much is riding on your tires.
MUMBLE MUMBLE
?
All right, Gunma. Get in the driver's seat.
I'll teach you how to do safety checks.
The engine sounds way better.
SWOOSH
I oughta learn about safety checks too...
Me too.
BONG
Don't you have dinner to make, Auntie?

The driving instructor will be watching for them more than anything else.
Those are the most important times to make safety checks.
Left and right turns, changing lanes, passing, stopping, and advancing.
And finally, look behind you with your own eyes.
Then your side mirror in the direction you want to go.
First, your rear-view mirror.
!!
And there are three things you need to check at all times.
VROOM
...first put your right blinker on, then check ① the rear-view mirror, ② the side mirror, and ③ behind you. Then you can slowly...
Basically, if you want to change to the right lane...
STOMP
Shut up!
Who told you to start the engine!?
VRR
!!
VROOM

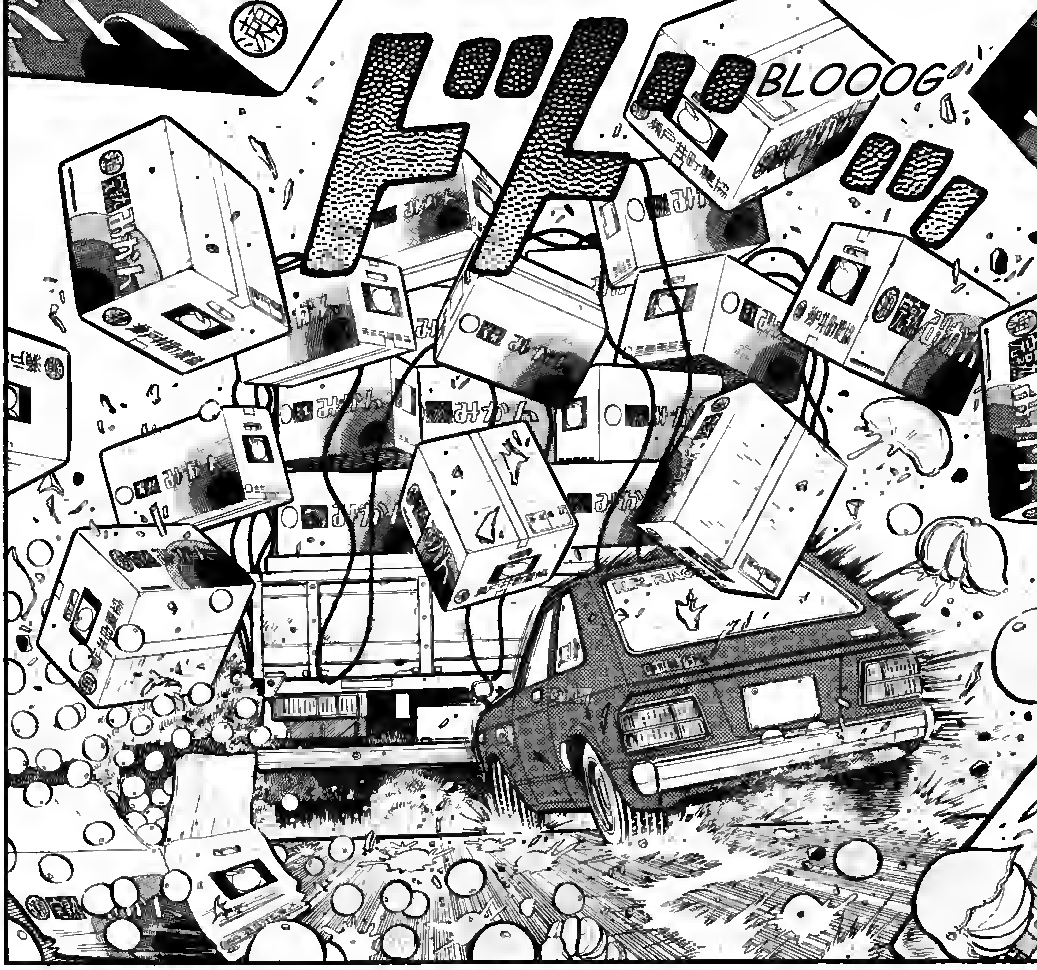
WHOOOOAAAA!
SCREEEETCH
Ah ...
There they go...
VWOOSH
ZOOOM
Oh my...
VOOM
Heh! Time for some hands-on practice! I'm tired of listening to your crap!
SHOOOM
Gunma! Stop!

Oh my!
J-Junko... There's a... There's a...
Are you crazy!? This isn't a driving course!
Lane change to the right!
Nakagawa Mfg
No...
BRAAAAAAAH
アアアアアア
Nakagawa Mfg
Yeeks!
Yikes!
スリップ
SCREET
SHOO
SHOO
SHOO

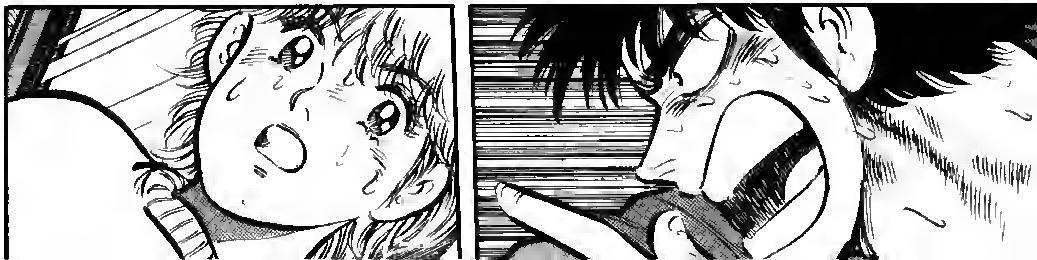
He bit me!
CHOMP
What are you whimpering about!? Grab him from behind!
BUMP
I did the safety checks, didn't I!?
Whoa!
THUMP
ZOOOOOOM
SCREEECH
Oh no...
Not this...
!?
Look... That truck in front of us...
Anything but this...

みかん
N.R. RACING TEAM
Those boxes are gonna fall!
Lane change... left...
ZOOM
BLAM
TUMP
TUMP
TUMP
SHOO
SHOO
SHOO

No! They're gonna hit us!
W.I.P. RACING TEAM
SHIK
CHECK!
SHOO
CHECK!
CHECK!
SHOO
SHOO
CHECK!
SHOOM
THWUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP


BLOOOG

うおおおおお
WHOOOAAAAAAA



50
N.D. RACING TEAM
YAK
ガヤ
YAK
ガヤ
WOO
フマン
WOO
フマン
YAK
ガヤ
YAK
ガヤ
WOO
フマン
WOO
フマン
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
CHECK!
CHECK!
CHECK!

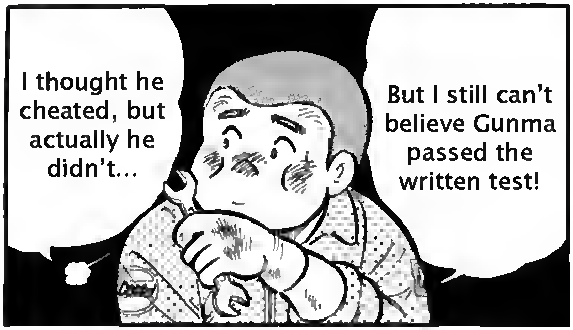
And now...
Heh... All three out cold... CHECK!
...
You forgot to check the front.
ゴン
SOCK

Chapter 2:
First Ride

It was crazy this morning.
He forced everybody in the apartment to see him off, like we're his fan club or something.
Morioka Motors
He finally went to take the test.

And he even fixed his hair.
The land-lady let him borrow a suit.

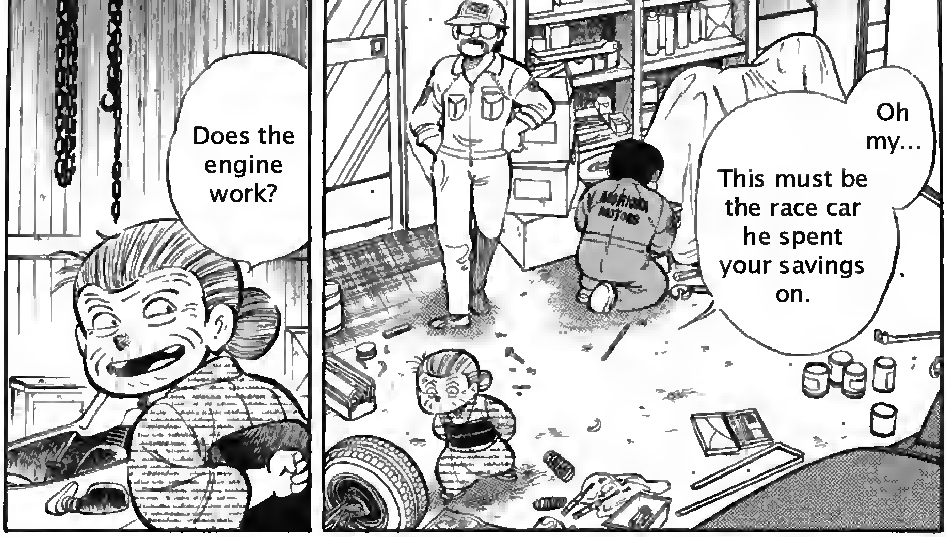
Like a soldier goin' off to the front lines!
Ha ha, sounds like Gunma!
MORIOKA

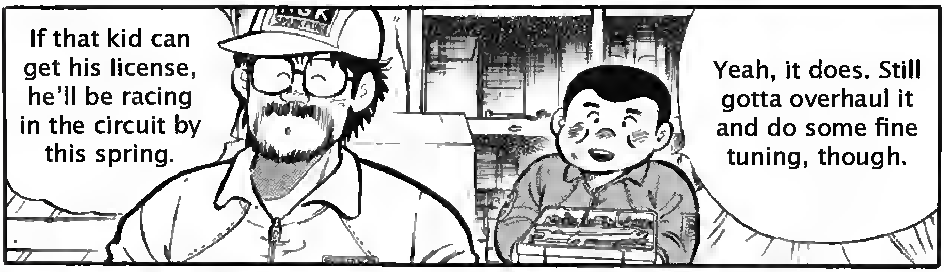

I thought he cheated, but actually he didn't...
But I still can't believe Gunma passed the written test!

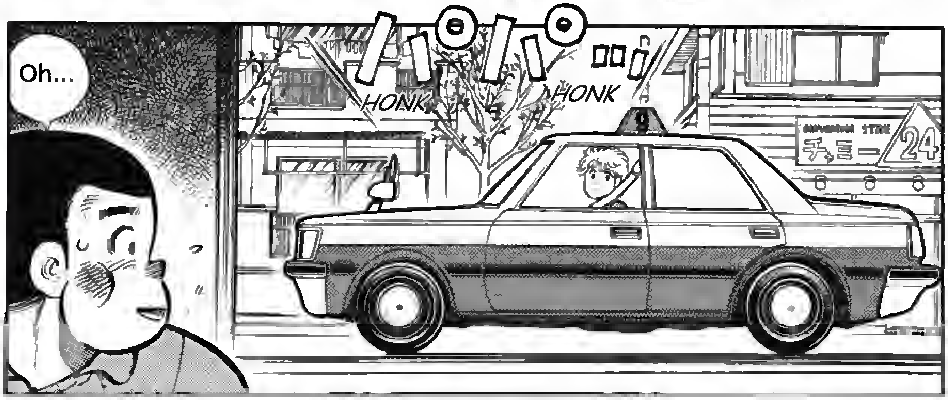
In that case, he's gotta pass.
HEH HEH HEH.

Maybe he passed the test so he's gotta fill out a bunch of paperwork.
But he's still not back yet.
It's all about will power, dude! I'll will my way through it!
Hmm... So his decisive attitude paid off.
In short, he chose the answers randomly.
Hi there!
Just hope he didn't blow it off and go screwing around with women.
Oh, hello ma'am.
He'll do fine. The Tigers won it all last year, so miracles can happen.
I hope we have some-thing to celebrate...
Wow, festive red rice.

NGK
It's almost 4 o'clock..
MORIOKA MOTORS
CHIRP CHIRP
TICK
TICK
TICK
TICK
Let me use your telephone!
I told Gunma to come straight back, whether he passed or failed.
DASH
RINNNNG
He might've gone back to the apartment.
BEEP
BOOP
BOOP
We don't know yet! He still hasn't come back! Bye now!
CLICK
I can't get any work done
MORIOKA
Heh heh... Just having a little fun...
NGK
Woohoo! That money's mine!
Yeah, so how was it, Auntie? I won the bet, didn't I!? 1,000 yen please!

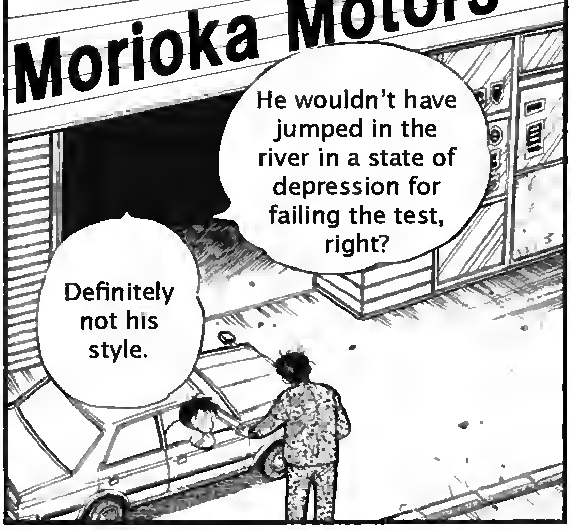

Does the engine work?
Oh my...
This must be the race car he spent your savings on.

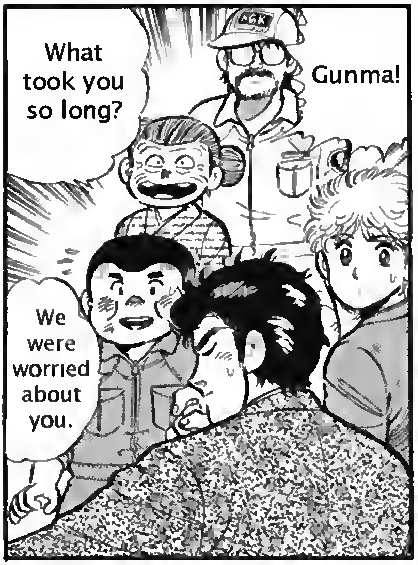

If that kid can get his license, he'll be racing in the circuit by this spring.
Yeah, it does. Still gotta overhaul it and do some fine tuning, though.


Oh...
HONK
HONK

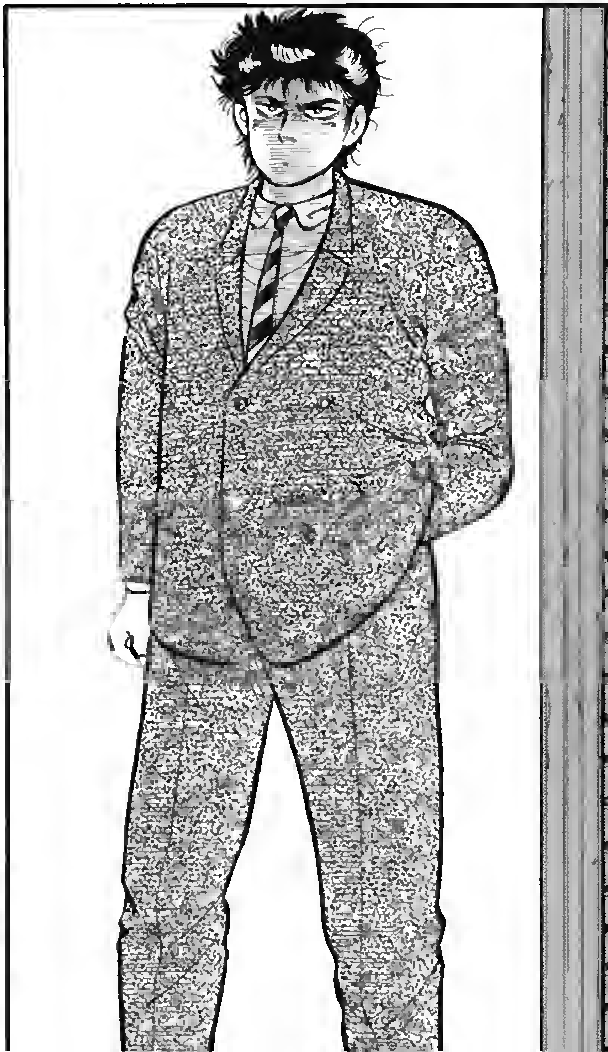
It's 4:30 now.
But he's still not back?
Just happened to be in the area on a training run...

What are you talking about?


Morioka Motors
He wouldn't have jumped in the river in a state of depression for failing the test, right?
Definitely not his style.


What took you so long?
Gunma!
We were worried about you.

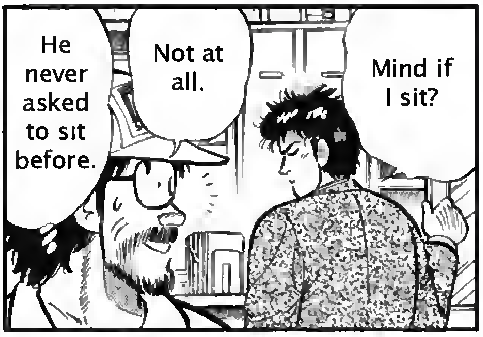
I'm pretty tired...
Hmm ...

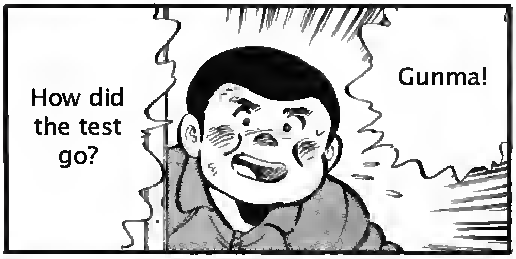


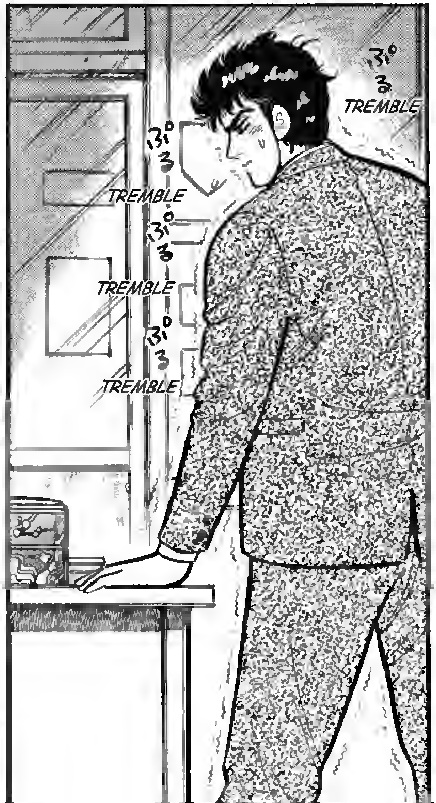
Maybe he's trying to trick us, and he'll laugh about it soon.
It's like he's hurtin' about something, deep down inside.
What's wrong with him? I guess he couldn't do it...
It's not like him to be so down. He must have failed.

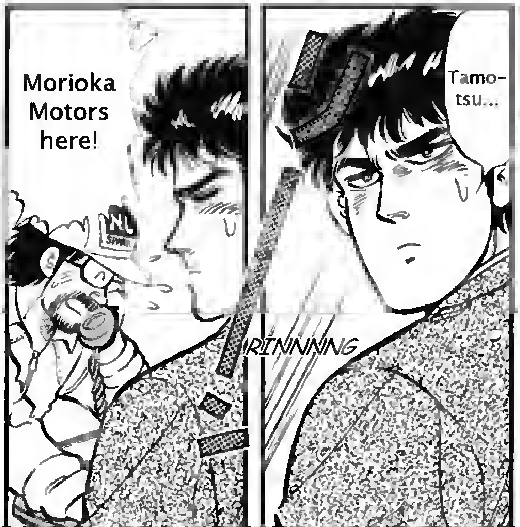
Fes-tive red rice.
Ooh ...

HM?


He never asked to sit before.
Not at all.
Mind if I sit?


How did the test go?
Gunma!

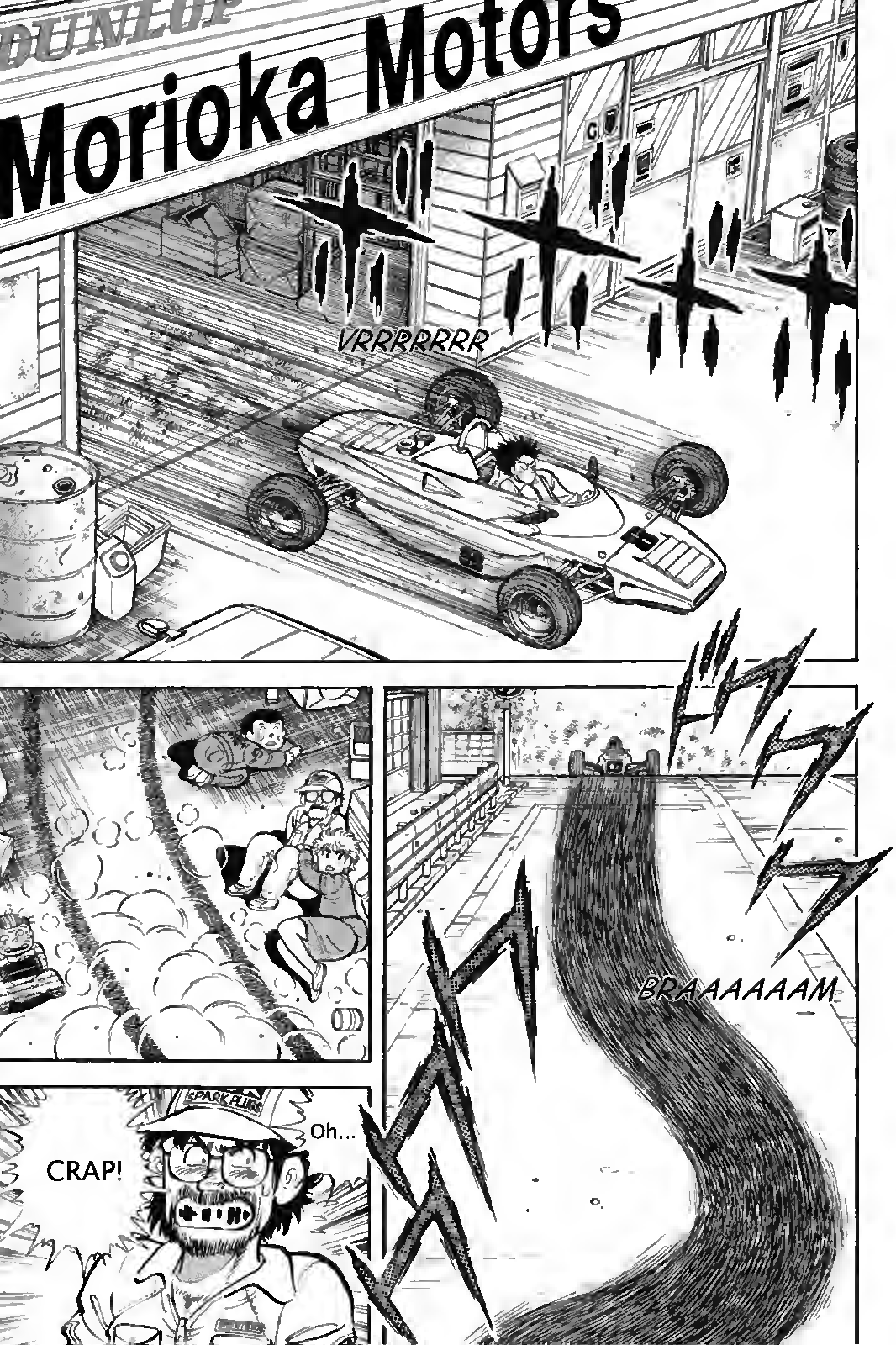

31°
TREMBLE
31°
TREMBLE
31°
TREMBLE
31°
TREMBLE


Morioka Motors here!
Tamo-tsu...
RINNNNG

WOBBLE
Gunma!
SILENCE
Mr. Inoue, good to hear from ya! Time for a safety inspection already, huh? You bet. I'll be over to pick it up tomorrow...
MORIOKA MOTORS
MORIOKA MOTORS
Heh... I wanna hear this baby purr.
My race car...
Just let the boy hear his car running! The test results can wait.
No problem, but what about the test?
Let me hear the engine.
Tamotsu ...

Just start the thing up. We need something to get him talkin'.
But ...
Thanks buddy.
...
You're not yourself today, dude...
So... this is the gear stick...
Guess you must've failed, huh...?
BAROOOM

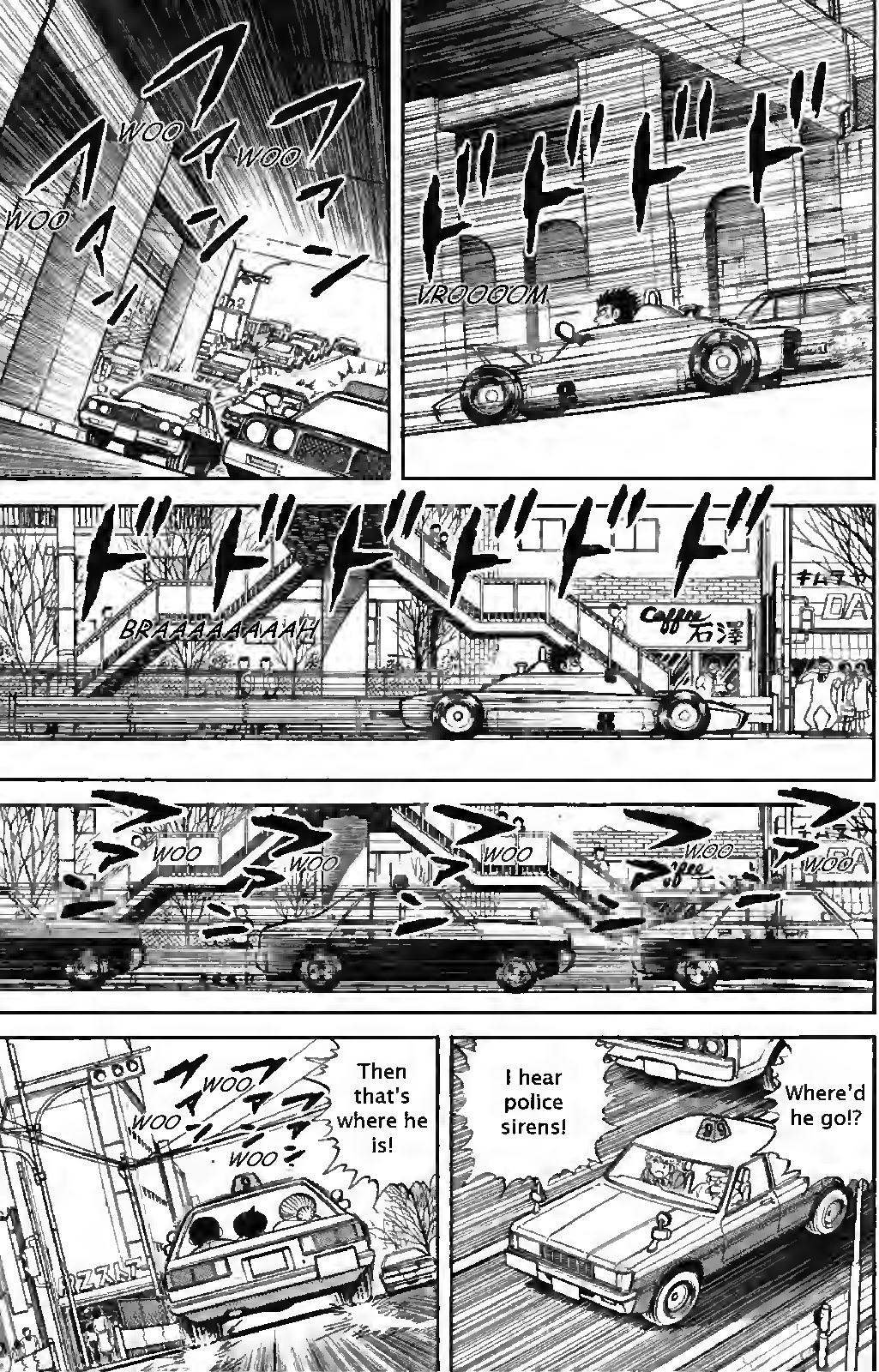
BROOM
BROOOOM
It sounds so sad.
The sound of a Bellco 16...
I don't like Gunma like this. It just ain't right...
Seems I lost that bet.
Let's see what this baby can do!
!?
BAROOOM


DUNLOP
Morioka Motors
VRRRRRRR
BRAAAAAAM
SPARK PLUGS
Oh...
CRAP!

He's taking out his depression on the town!
We gotta stop him!
BRAAAAAAM
It must have fallen off somewhere!
How dangerous to be driving a car with the top half missing
Awesome!
ZOOOOOOM

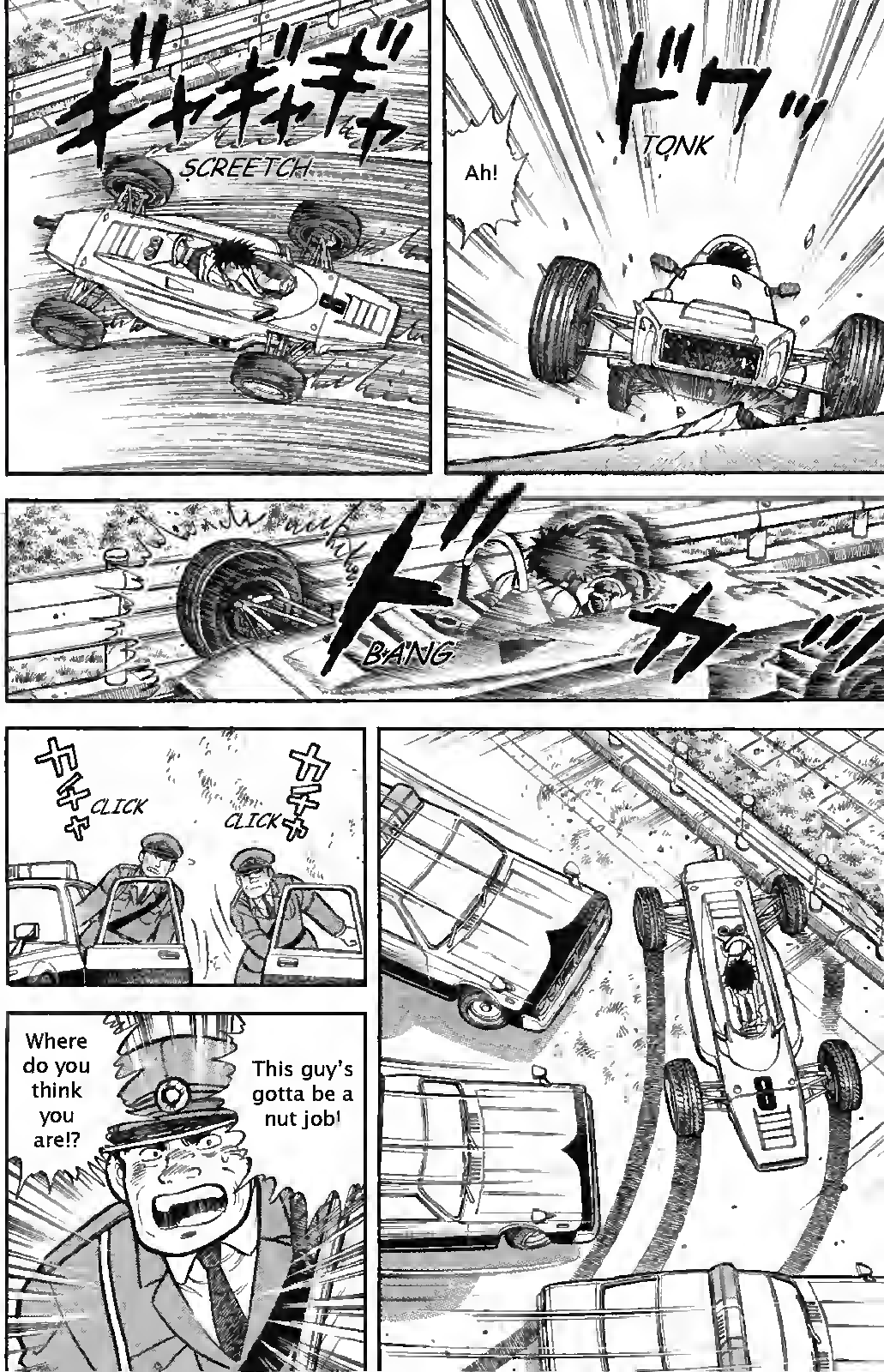
This steering wheel ain't got any play in it! What's the deal!?
SHOOM
SCREEEEEETCH
IRRRK
Whoa!
CRASH

This ...
Thing's
Got...
BRAAAAAAM
8
POWER!
Some ...
PHOO
OH
ZOOOOOM


WOO
WOO
WOO
V.ROOOOM
BRAAAAAAAAH
Coffee 石澤
WOO
WOO
WOO
WOO
WOO
Then that's where he is!
I hear police sirens!
Where'd he go!?

It's scraping the bottom!
What the...
ガガガガ
SCRAAAPE
WOOOOH
WOO
WOO
WOO
And I mean...
No-body...
Stop im-mediately!
WOO
WOO
You in the race car!
ZOOOOOOM

Nobody gets in front of me!
SHOOOOM


キャギャギャ
SCREETCH
ドワッ
TONK
Ah!
ドガ
BANG
カチャ
CLICK
カチャ
CLICK
Where do you think you are!?
This guy's gotta be a nut job!

Get out?
HEH.
PIM
Get out of the car!
Read it and weep, suckers!
Dum duh duh DUM!
Drag him out if he won't listen!
Is that what you really want?
SWISH
Gunma Akagi
Nationality
Address
Issued
Valid until birthday in 1989
Tokyo Metropolitan Public Safety Commission
Driver's License

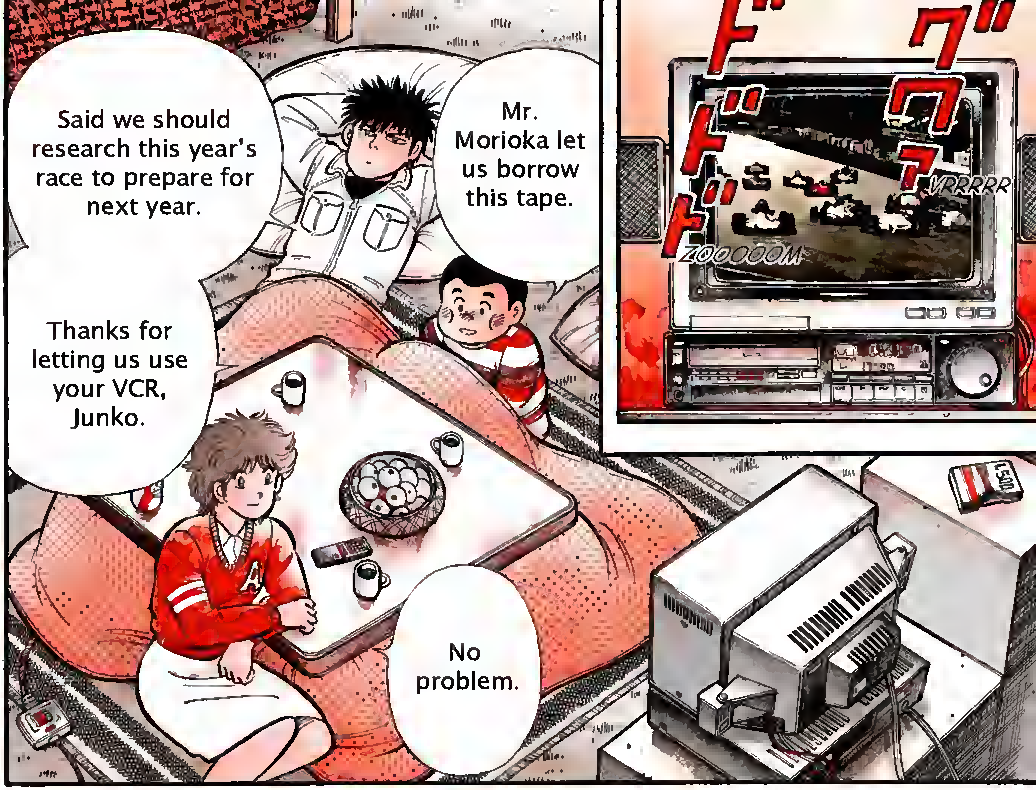
Heh heh heh
Satisfied?
...!
So what?
...
Like givin' a gun to a six-year-old.
Wow...
MGK SPARK PLUG
YAK
YAK
YAK
YAK
9
Let go of me! Geez!
I forced that reception lady to gimme the license right away!
This is my day to celebrate!
Get yer hands off me!
What're you doing!?

Chapter 3:
On Hold

ZOOOOOM
ZOOOOOM
22
TAMA
19
MAXIM

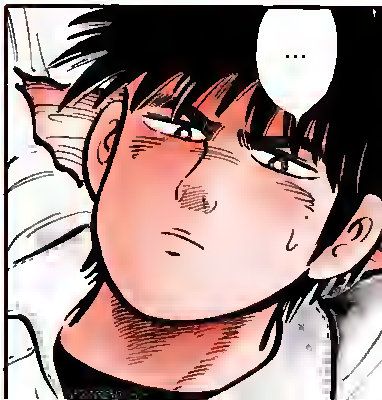
ZOOOOOM
19

HH
ZOOOOOM
22
TAMA

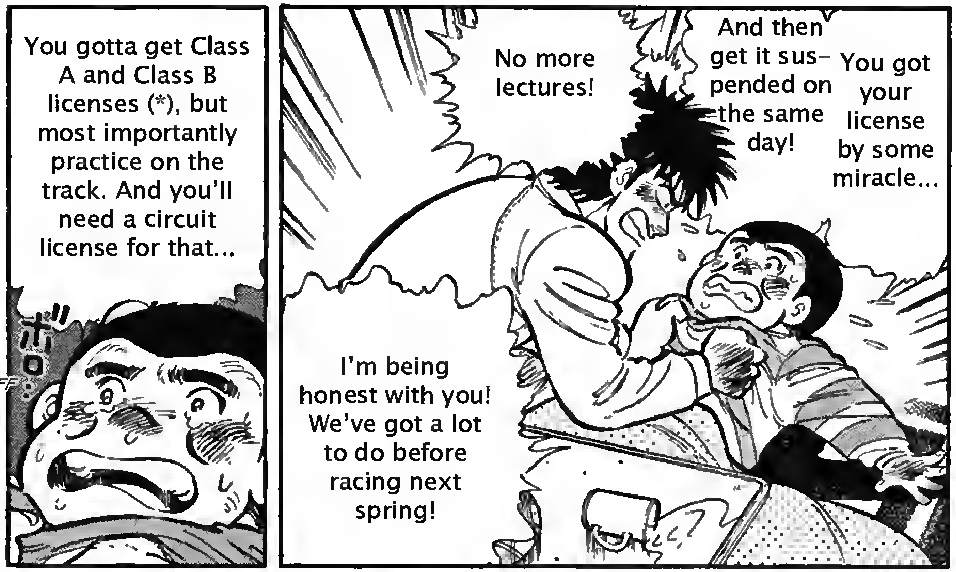

Said we should research this year's race to prepare for next year.
Mr. Morioka let us borrow this tape.
Thanks for letting us use your VCR, Junko.
No problem.
VRRRR
ZOOOOM

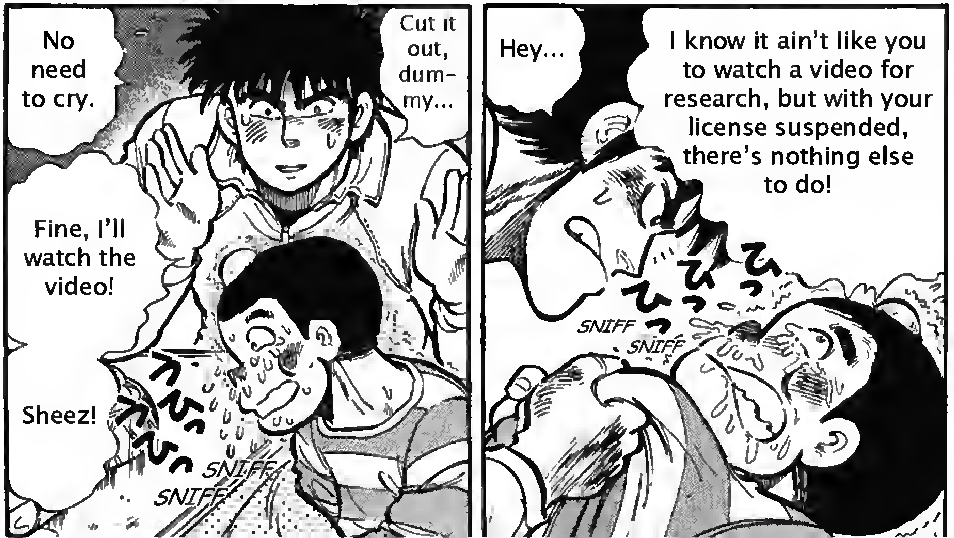
I wanna hit that.

And we really appreciate your private lessons and all.
Watch the tape, Gunma!


...

PAT
Totally. Isn't it romantic?
How pretty ...
Hey, it's snowing.
Don't you got some-thing to help Granny with?
Tamo-tsu ...
Watch the tape, dude!
Gunma!
I don't gotta go to the bathroom!
Well, don't you wanna go take a crap?
No, I don't.

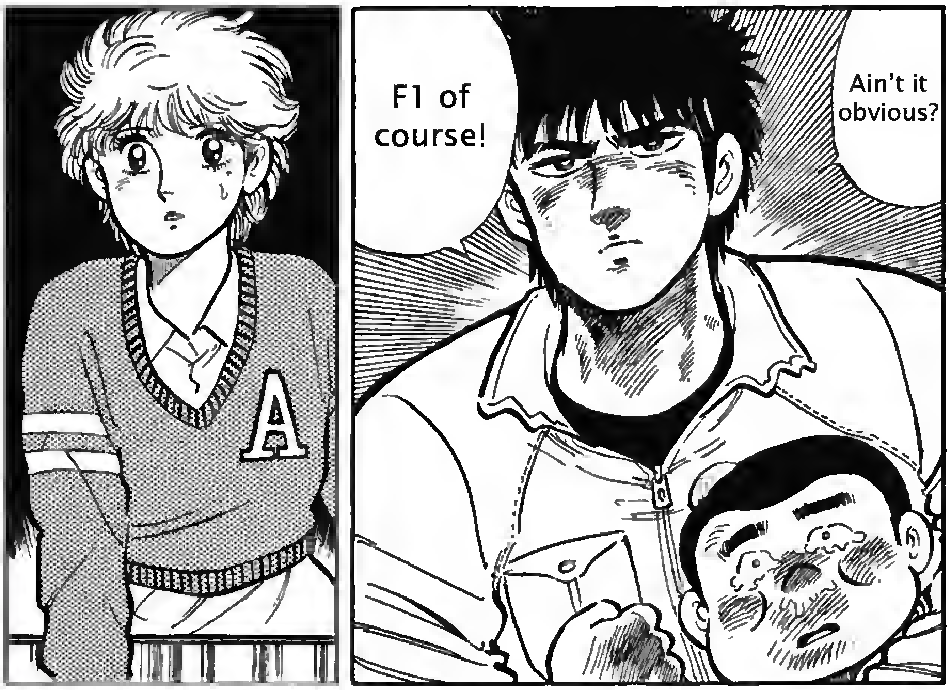


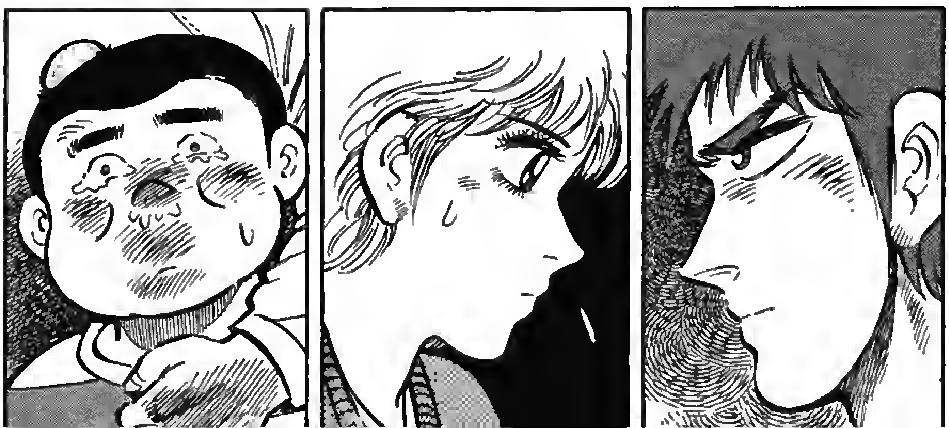


* Class A and Class B licenses are required to participate in competitive motor sports.

How far do you two plan on going?
Hey...
Pfft ...
A
I mean, what class are you aiming for?
Your goal.
SHUK
What do you mean how far?
Ready? Blow..
BLOOOW
Tell her, Tamotsu.
Oh yeah!

OW!
He hit me again...
SOCK
Win at the F2 level if we can...
HEH HEH HEH
Well, we never really talked about it.


A
F1 of course!
Ain't it obvious?



I sup-pose...
It's best to dream big.
Ha ha ...
Ha ha ha ha...
F1?
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
Stupid!
It's not a dream!
TWITCH
Dream or not, you shouldn't be so cocky. Know your own limits, or you could get seriously injured.
If you say so.
BRAAAAN
BAAAM
Stop it!
But just watch, I'll make you my...
GULP
Well it's makin' me limp!
MUNCH
You love to get people worked up with that cute little face of yours...

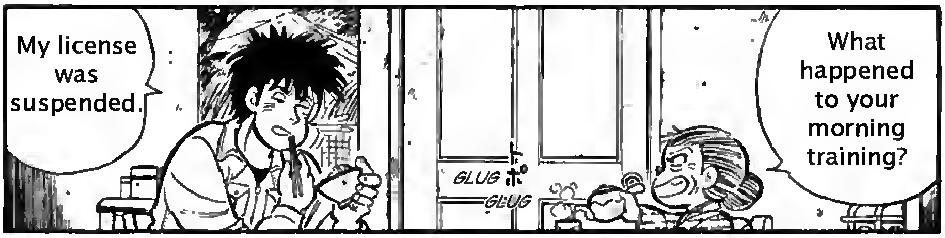
URRGH
URRGH
URRGH
If you wanna race the right way, you've gotta know your own limits!
I'm saying it for your own good!
What if you die?
I mean ...
GUULP
What do you care if I die or not!? I thought you hate my guts!
I mean...
What are you so worked up about!?
WHEW
You have a point.
Oh...
Well...

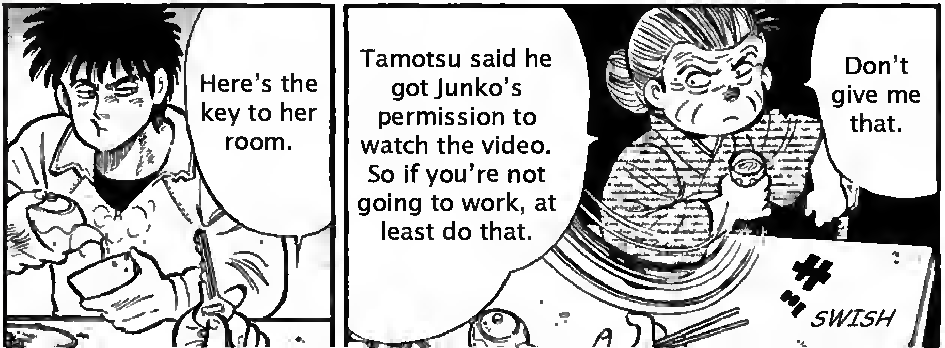
...
SIGH...
It's no-thing ...
Why the long faces?
What happened here?
Oh, I see...
...
Watching a video in her room.
With "those" two...
Where's Junko?
He reminds me of Ryuji.
By the way, that Gunma...
HUH?
...
...
If you two aren't careful, that lively young man might take Junko away from you!
HM
HM
HM
No way!
He's nothing like Ryuji!

Morning

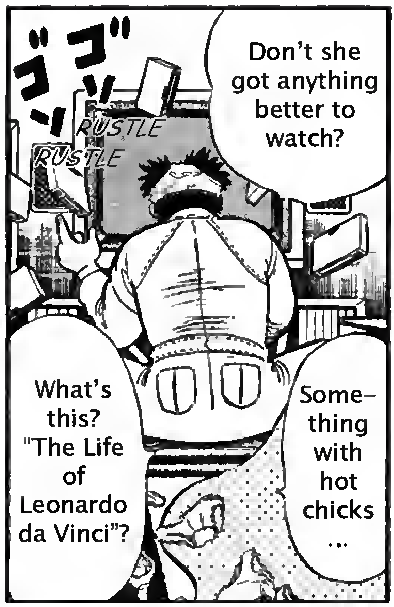
Man, that snow really piled up.
SCRATCH
FLOP
FLIP

What do you mean, "morning"?
SHOOK
It's already past noon!

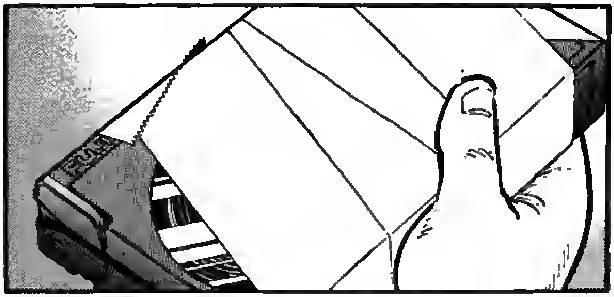

My license was suspended.
What happened to your morning training?
GLUG
GLUG


Here's the key to her room.
Tamotsu said he got Junko's permission to watch the video. So if you're not going to work, at least do that.
Don't give me that.
SWISH

Don't you touch anything else in that room! Just watch the video.
SWISH
Not so fast!
...
Yes!
Do I look like the type who'd have fun playing with women's panties?
Who do you think I am, Granny?
小森純子
Junko Komori
Yawn ...
VRRRRR


RUSTLE
RUSTLE
Don't she got anything better to watch?
What's this? "The Life of Leonardo da Vinci"?
Some-thing with hot chicks ...

Watching other people race like this pretty much sucks...
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
BASH



!?

PUP

and Beta
KASHUNK

Maybe a private video with Junko in a shower scene?
Could it be?

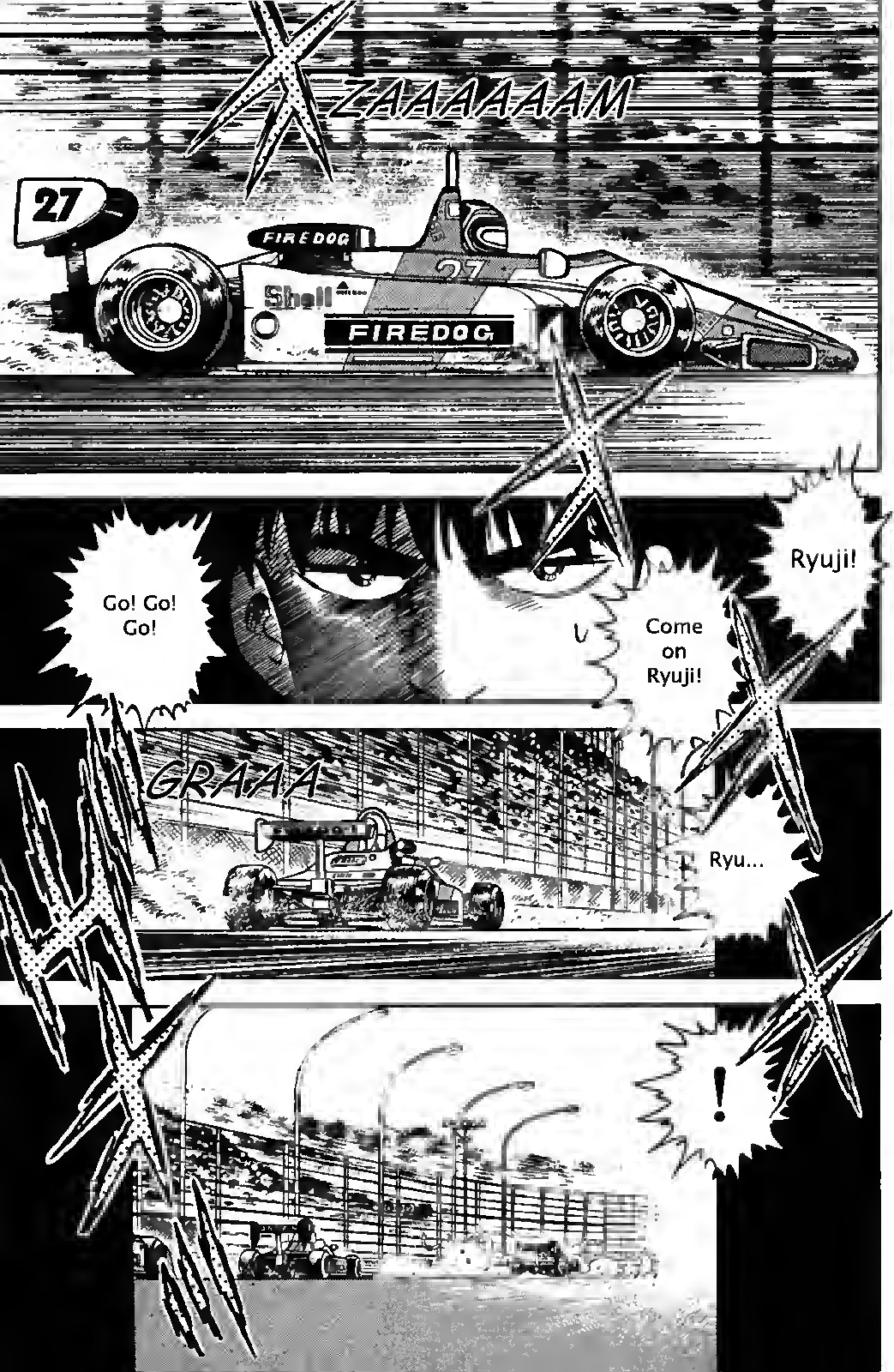
It's all wrapped up in secrecy!
Oh yeah! Here we go!

FLICK
SHERRRRR
!
I love you, Junko.
VROOOM
VRRR
RYU
I'll win this race for us.
Then we'll get married.
Who is this dude?
But this time I'm serious!
How's this?
Okay, okay Ryuji!
How many times have I heard that...
Give me a nice pose!

...
Oh...
What's the matter?
You two are acting really weird!
It's nothing serious really...
So what's the big talk?
...
...
...not talking about Ryuji anymore...
It's just that lately... You're...

...not?
I'm...
CLAK
I always think about him.
Don't be silly.
...always have a place in my heart.
Ryuji will...
VRRRRRRRR

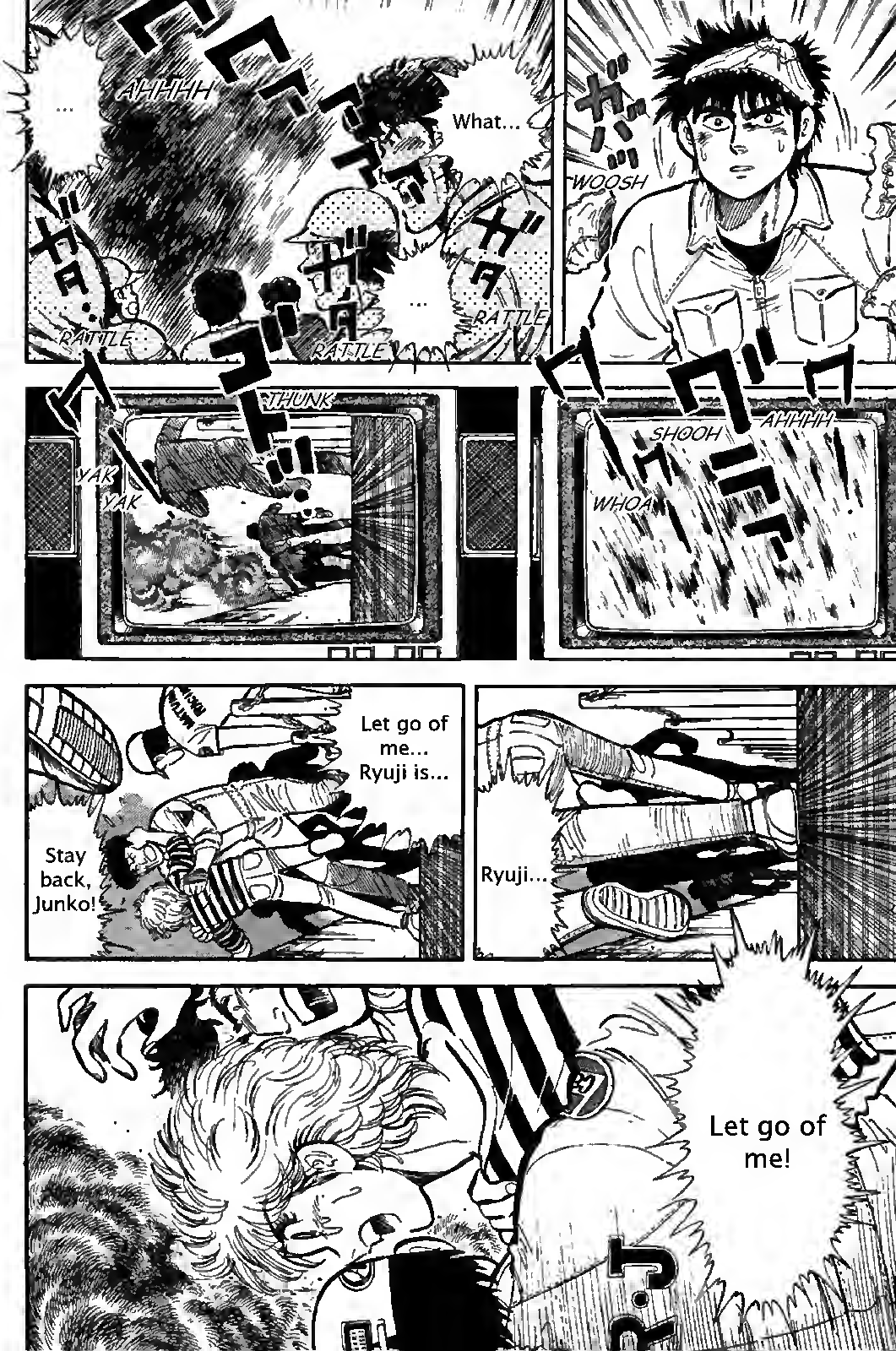
Junko! Hurry up and get the camera!
Ryuji's almost to the home stretch, and he's in the lead...
YEAHH
Yes! Ryuji's in first!
YEAHH
ZOOOOOM
Here he comes!
BRAAAAAH...
Yes! Keep it going Ryuji!
ZOOM
Come on Ryuji!

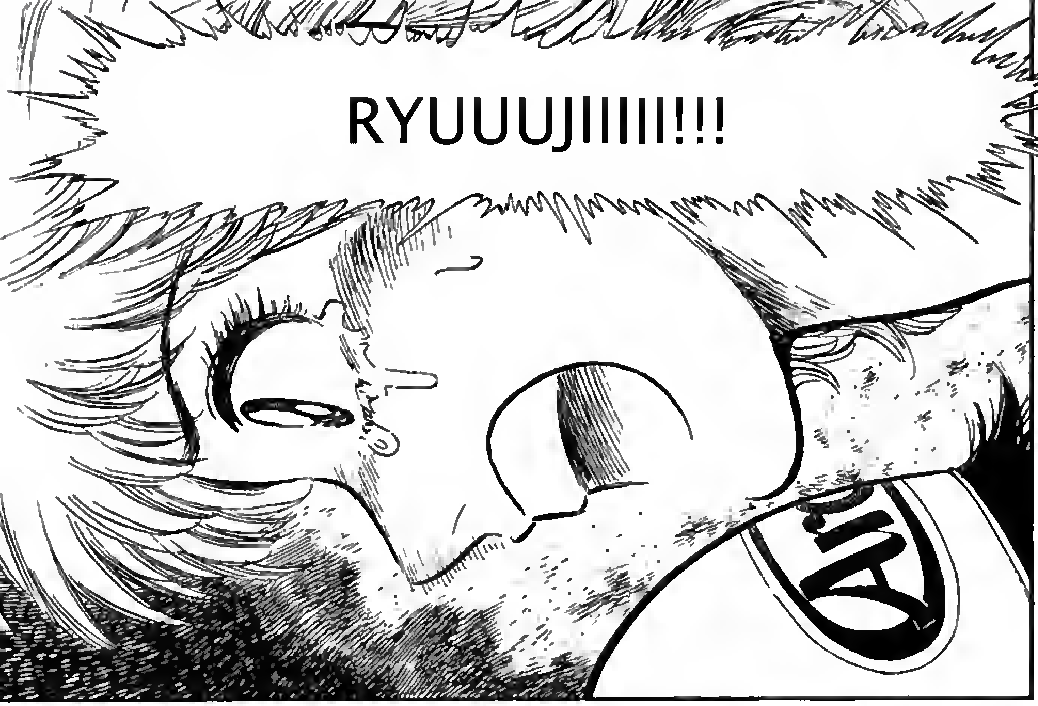

ZAAAAAAM
27
FIREDOG
Shell
FIREDOG
Go! Go! Go!
Come on Ryuji!
Ryuji!
GRAAA
Ryu...
!

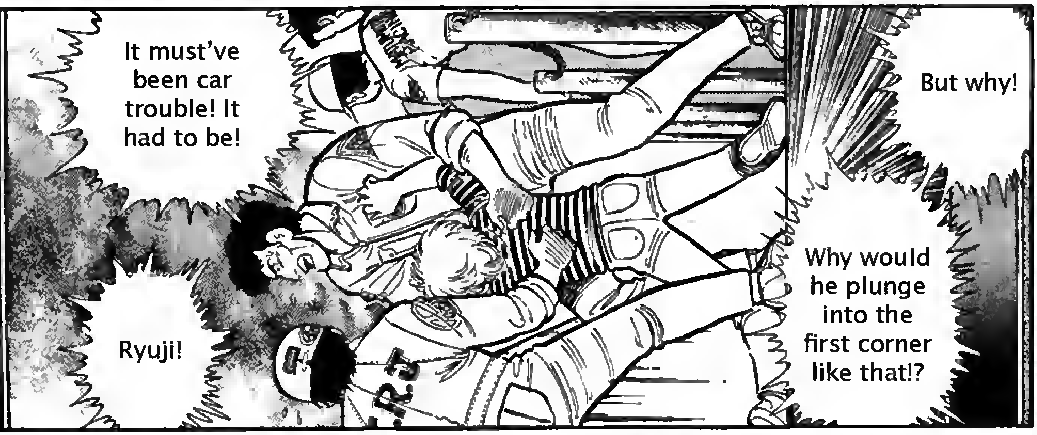
ゴゴゴゴゴゴ
KABOOOOOOM
JAPAN
Canon

KABOOOOOM

Canon
JAPAN

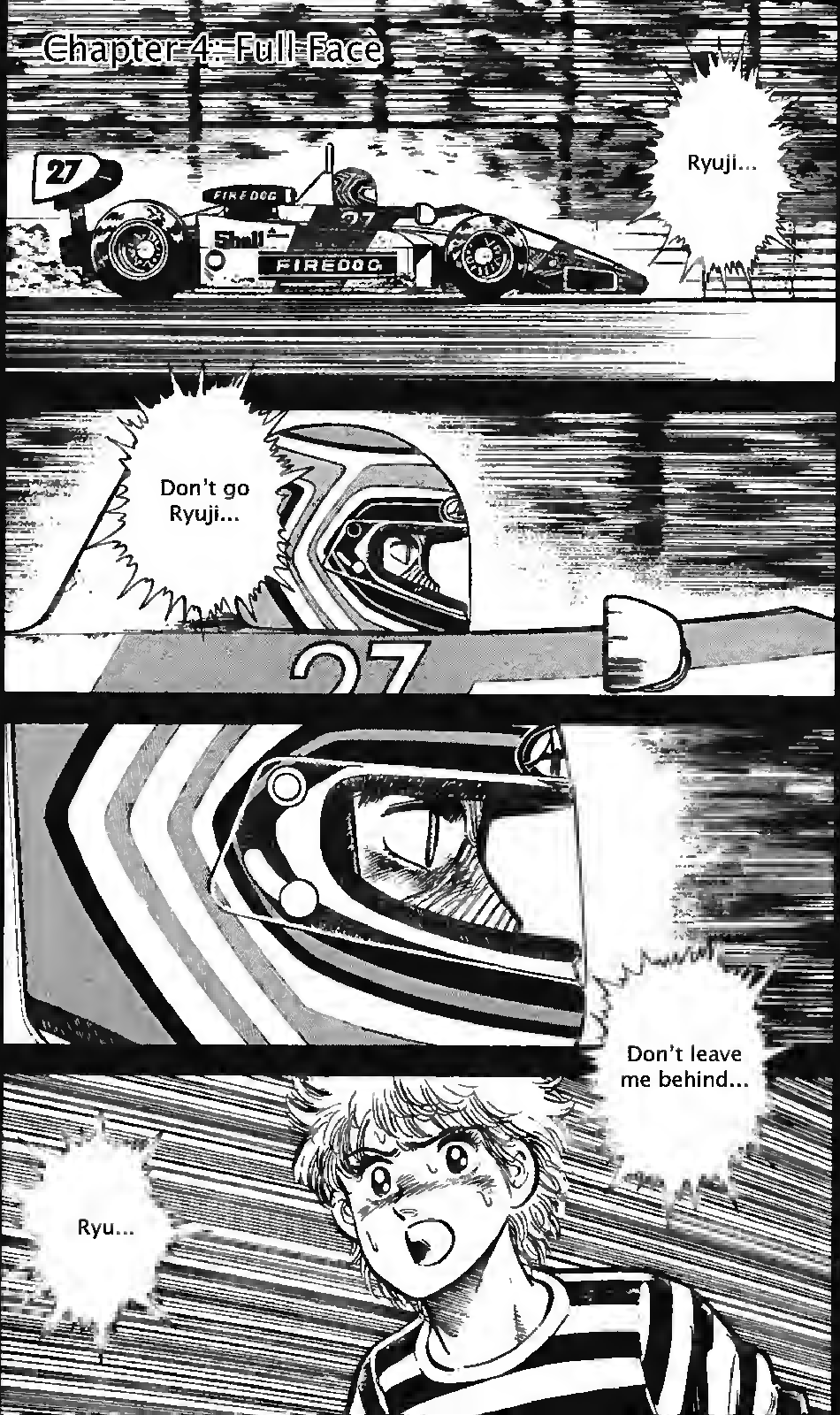

...
AHHHH
What...
WOOSH
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
THUNK
YAK
YAK
SHOOH
AHHHH
WHOA
Let go of me... Ryuji is...
Stay back, Junko!
Ryuji...
Let go of me!

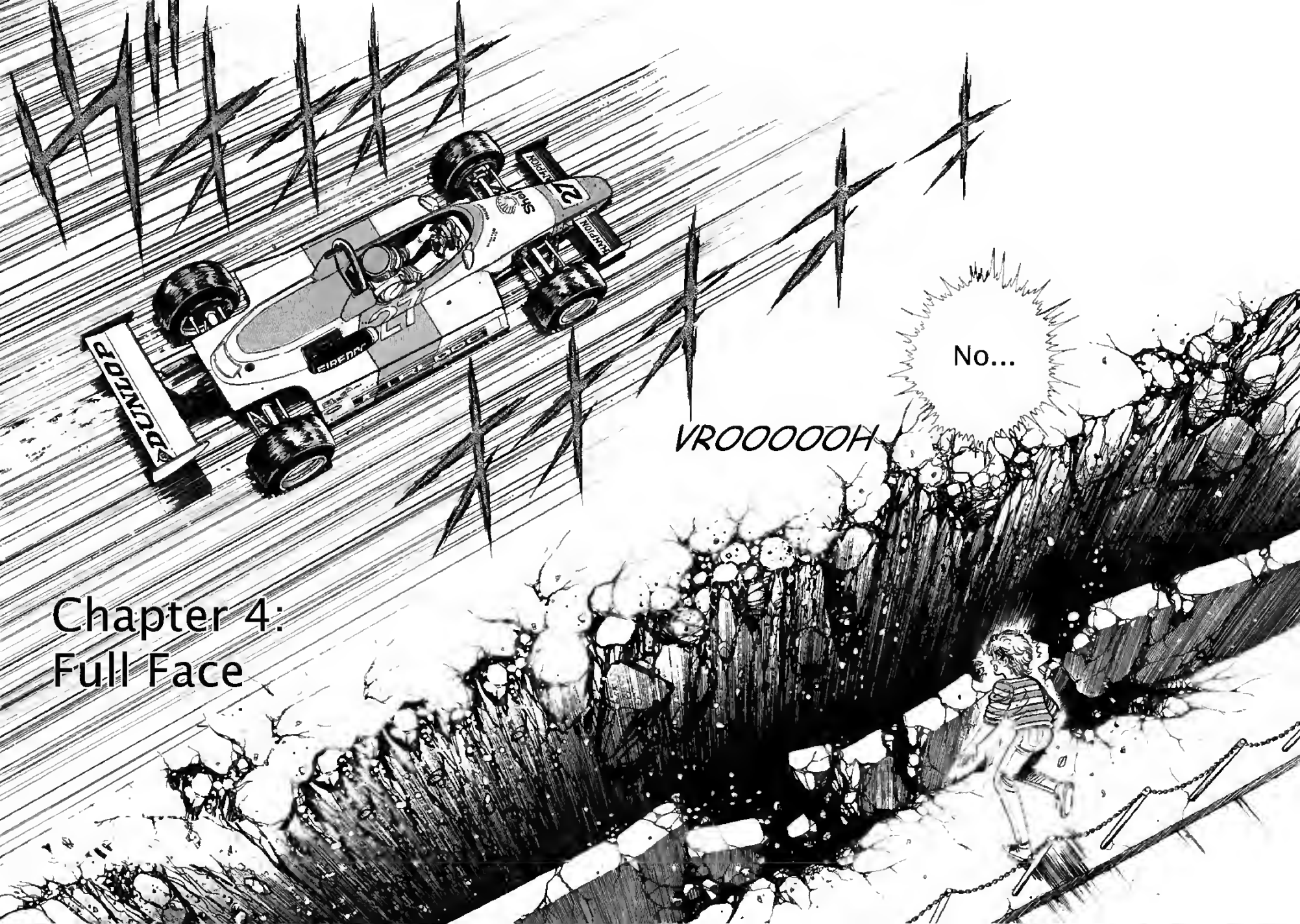

RYUUUJIIIII!!!


It must've been car trouble! It had to be!
Ryuji!
But why!
Why would he plunge into the first corner like that!?

...
KUSHANG
ヤチャ

...
Granny... Who's Ryuji?
PIP
But everyone was saying, he was the only one with a chance to pass up Japan's top racers, Hoshino and Nakajima.
Just as you saw, that F3 race did him in...
The man Junko loved most.
He was Junko's sweet-heart.
But as long as Ryuji Saeki lives on in her heart...
...wearing panties on your head is as close as you'll get.
You may be interested in Junko...
Ryuji...


Chapter 4: Full Face
27
FIREDOG
Shell
FIREDOG
Ryuji...
Don't go Ryuji...
Don't leave me behind...
Ryu...


No...
VROOOOOH
Chapter 4:
Full Face

No...
VROOOOOH

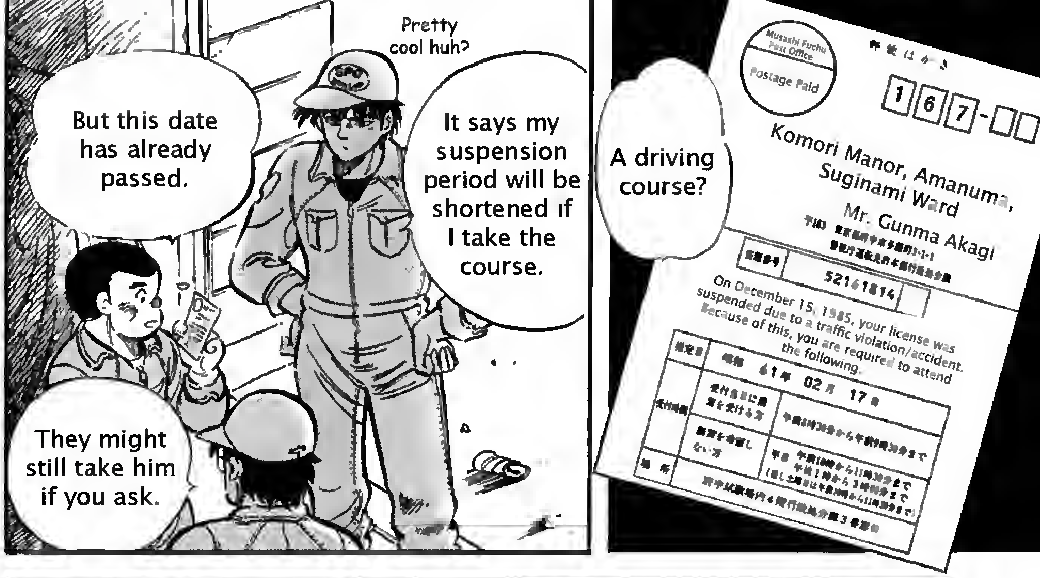
Chapter 4: Full Face

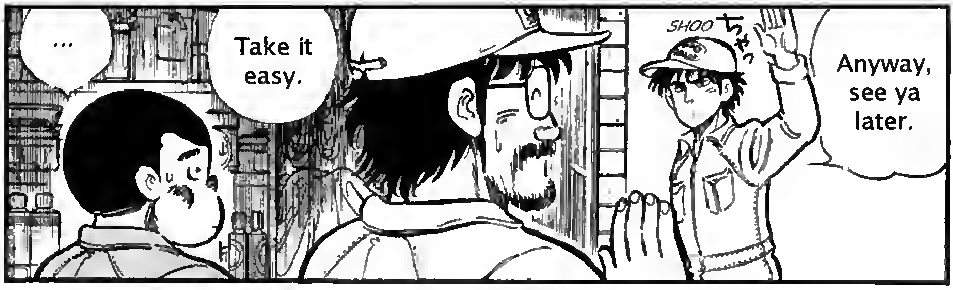
Ryuji...
Ryuji...
Wait...
I love you... so much...
Why did you leave me...
Ryuji ...

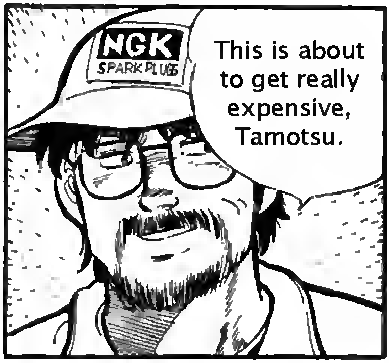
No... Please no....
Don't... leave me...
すはぁ
GRAAAASH
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
カラン
CLING

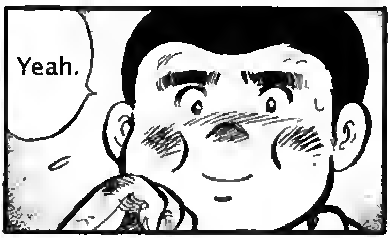
!
...?
FWOOOH
Blood?
Stupid chick!
THAP
LICK

You oughta take the car over there in my truck next day off.
I asked them to keep it open for us.
Morioka Motors
Sounds like there's a space available in the Tsukuba garage.
Really?
I've got feelings for you, Tamotsu.
なぜ?
RUB
It's nothin'.
Mr. Morioka, I can't thank you enough.
Geez! I was just messin' with ya, kid!
How do I, uh... I'm really sorry, but.. A man should really, um..
Um, thank you for saying that, but.. Um, I think a woman would be more, uh..
I need to go out for a while, okay?
Bein' polite now?
Where'd that come from?
Boss?
Boss!
SLIP

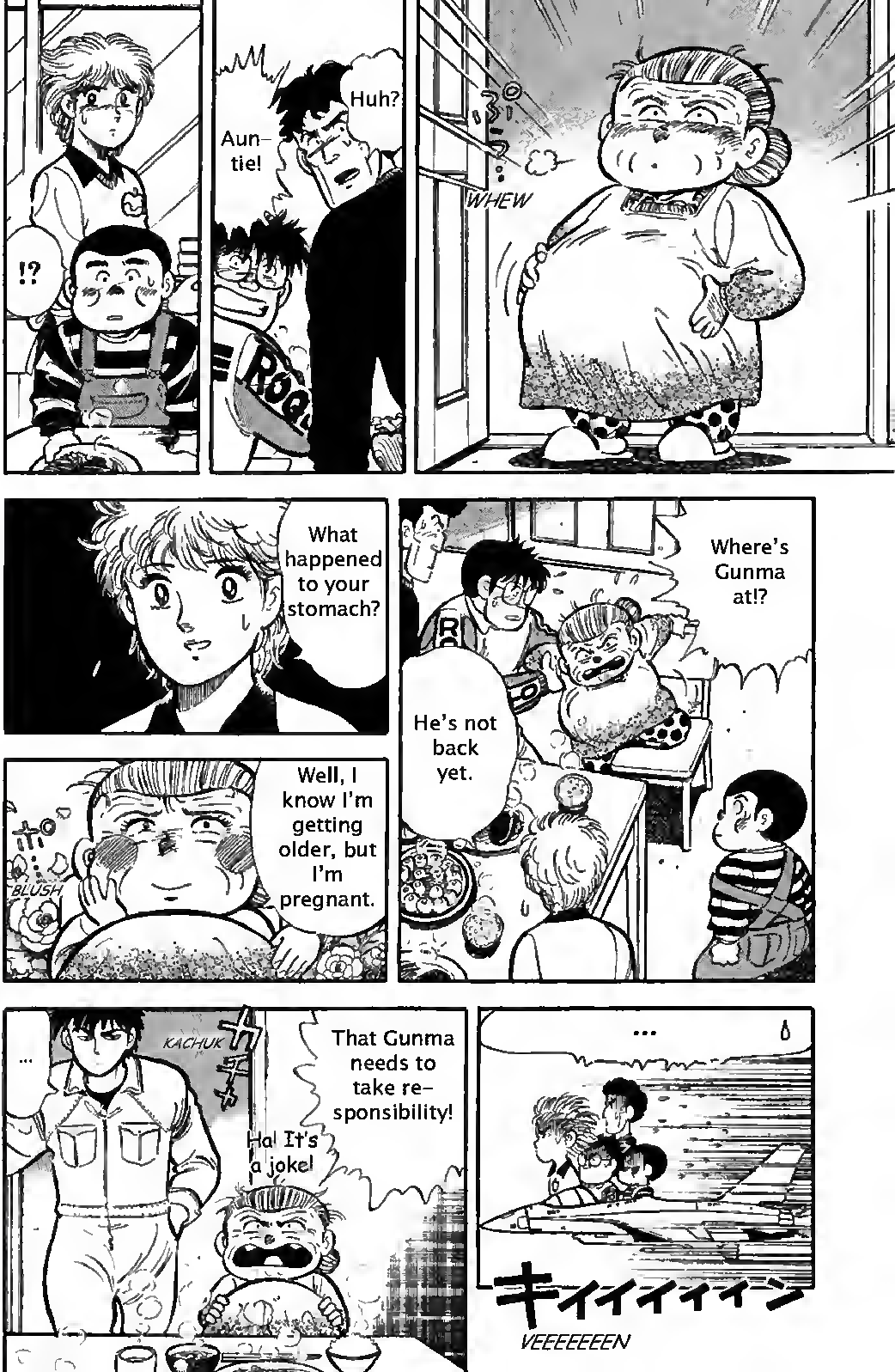

But this date has already passed.
Pretty cool huh?
It says my suspension period will be shortened if I take the course.
They might still take him if you ask.
A driving course?
Musashi Fuchu Post Office
Postage Paid
167-
Komori Manor, Amanuma, Suginami Ward
Mr. Gunma Akagi
521618 14
On December 15, 1985, your license was suspended due to a traffic violation/accident. Because of this, you are required to attend the following.


...
Take it easy.
SHOO
Anyway, see ya later.


NGK
SPARK PLUGS
This is about to get really expensive, Tamotsu.


Yeah.

CHEW
CHEW
CHEW
07
FIREDOG
FOOO
...
Don't go
Ryuji...


!?
Huh?
Aun–
tie!
WHEW
What happened to your stomach?
Where's Gunma at!?
He's not back yet.
Well, I know I'm getting older, but I'm pregnant.
BLUSH
...
KACHUK
That Gunma needs to take re–sponsibility!
Ha! It's a joke!
...
キィィィィィン
VEEEEEEEN

Where's my food!?
...
ガヤ
CLATTER
I'm hungry.
Here!
コト
TUNK
Huh, Junko?
Why didn't you die?
...
If you really love him, why didn't you die with him?
Huh?

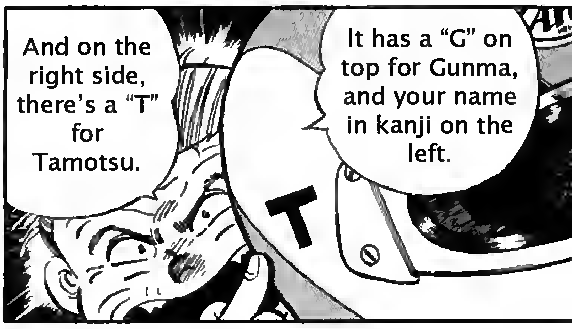
Ryuji!
I'm talkin' about your boy-friend!
SLAM
I don't know what you're...
W... where'd that come from...?
Your "top secret" one.
I saw the video.
?
How... how dare you!
That's really none of your business.
...
If the man you love died right in front of you, how come you're living it up?

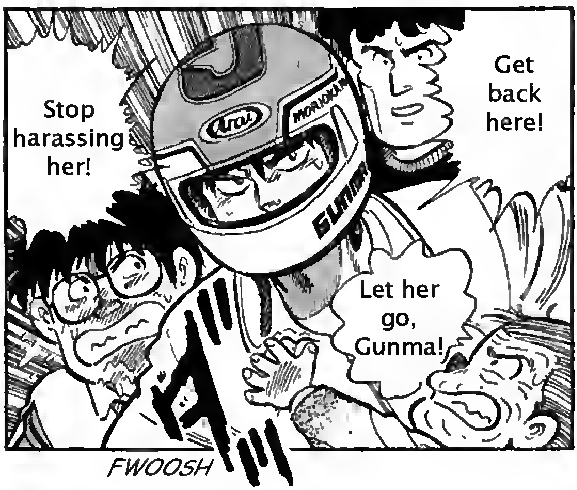
I'll water it down.
Yes... That would, uh...
Auntie, this miso soup is a little too rich for me.
Oh yeah, we have pickled plums.
Oh... Oh I suppose so...
If you don't cut it out...
But you sure yell out his name a lot in your sleep.
That's enough!
Unless you didn't really love him. Now that would make sense...
I'll bill you for it later.
So it was you then, the one who broke my window this morning.
I've got a present for you. Take a look.
Now Gunma ...
Answer me!

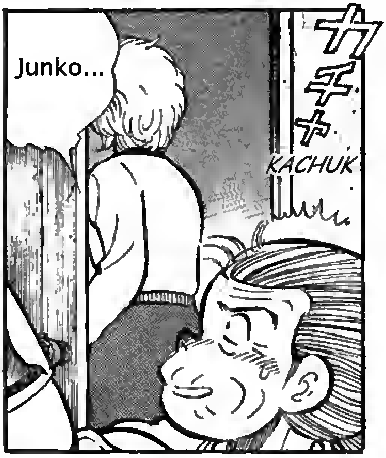
Arai
MORIOKA Racing Team
A friend of mine named Umino designed it. Do you like it?

MORIOKA Racing Team
軍馬
GUNMA KAGI

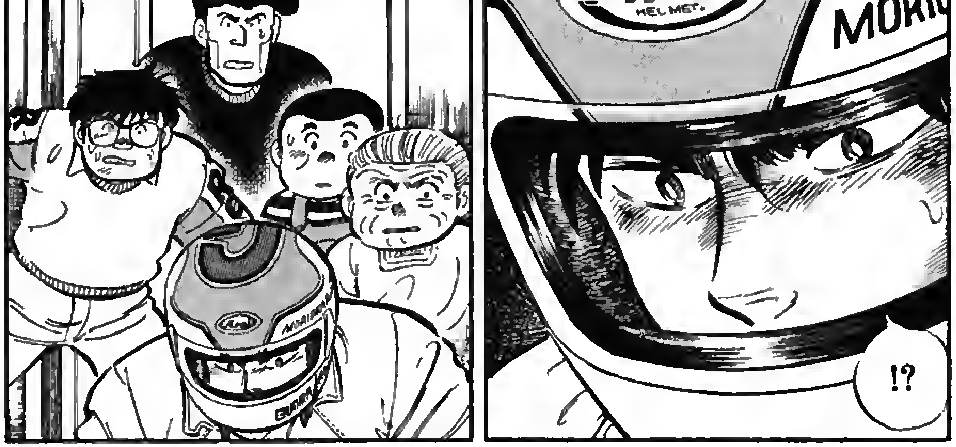
Ha ha ha...
ガビ
POP
Any good racer has a helmet. Take good care of it!
T


And on the right side, there's a "T" for Tamotsu.
It has a "G" on top for Gunma, and your name in kanji on the left.
T

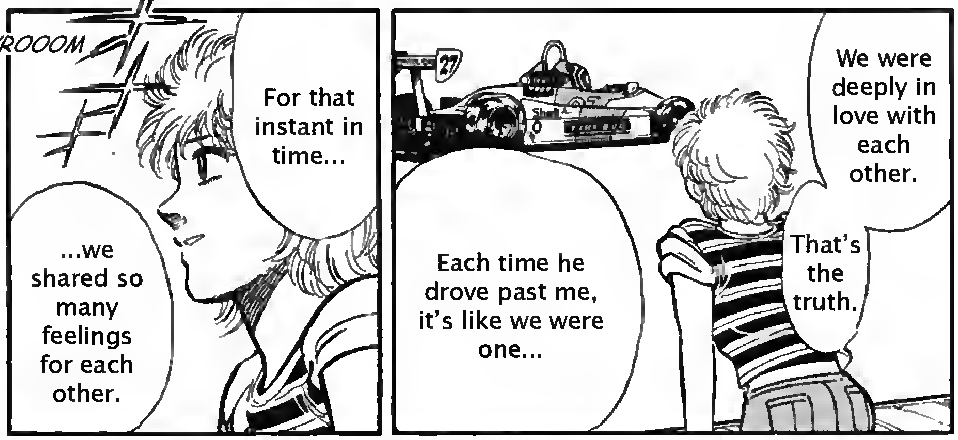

Stop harassing her!
Get back here!
Let her go, Gunma!
FWOOSH

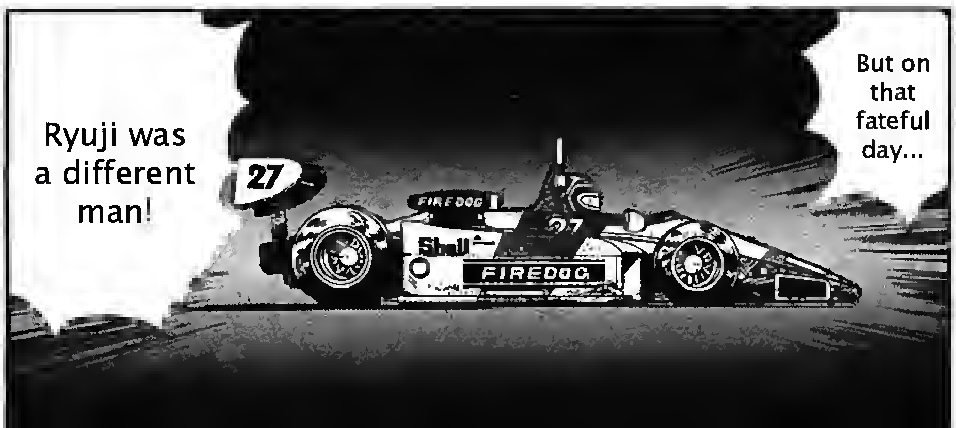

Junko...
カチャ
KACHUK

Ah...
THUNK
SWOOSH
Junn-nnko!
Let go of me!
Gunma!
I wanted to die!
Why didn't you die!?
Ryuji, just before he died...
...wasn't "my" Ryuji.
Why not!?
But I couldn't do it.
If I did...
...everything would be so much easier.

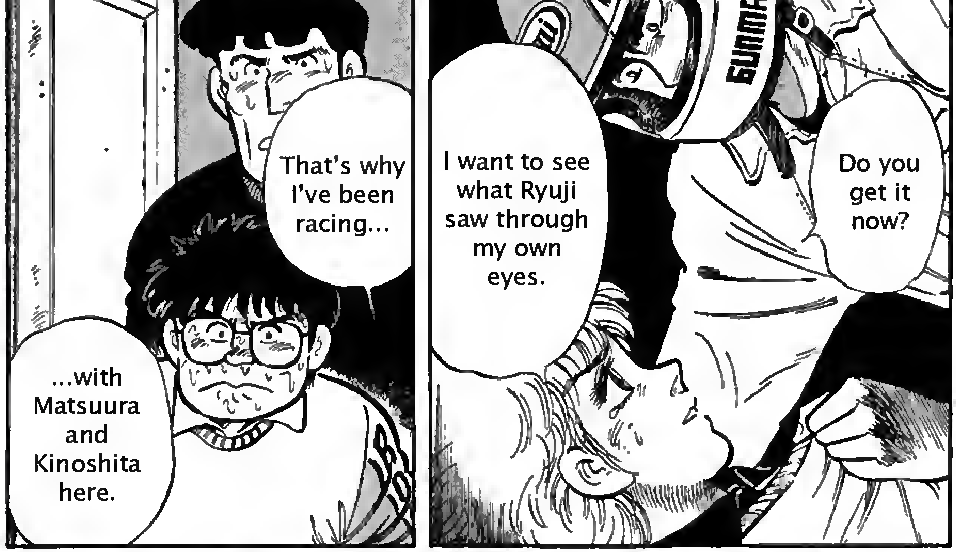

!?

And the instant he drove past me, we always had a connection.
Whenever he raced the circuit, I'd always go to watch.

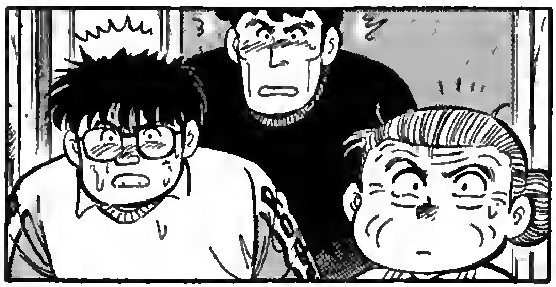

VROOOM
For that instant in time...
...we shared so many feelings for each other.
27
We were deeply in love with each other.
That's the truth.
Each time he drove past me, it's like we were one...

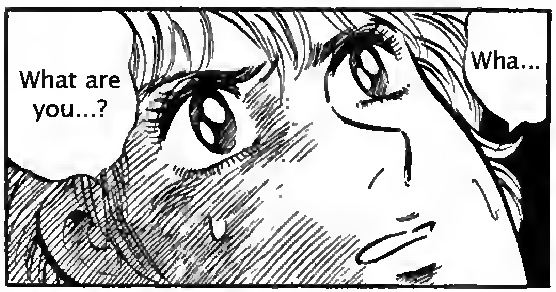

Ryuji was a different man!
27
FIREDOG
Shell
But on that fateful day...

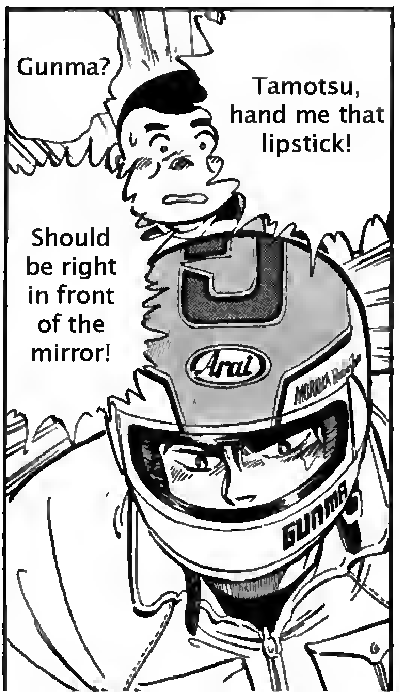
It's as if...
Ryuji was...
...focused on something else!
We were so in love...
He meant everything to me!
And I should have meant every-thing to him!
But still...
...he left me.
He went away, focusing on something else. Something mysterious...
Something mysterious ...?


That's why I've been racing...
...with Matsuura and Kinoshita here.
I want to see what Ryuji saw through my own eyes.
Do you get it now?
GUNMA

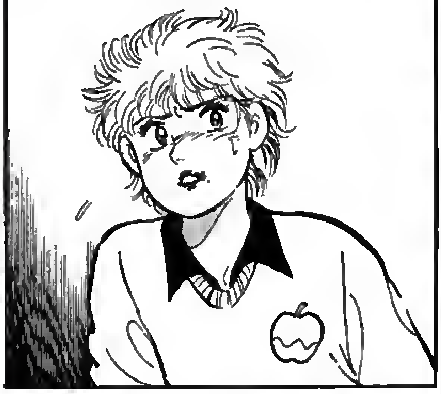
MORIOKA
GULP
So please let go.

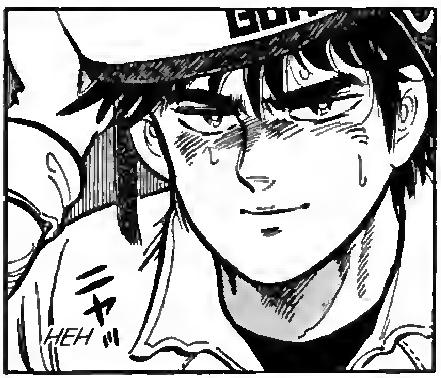


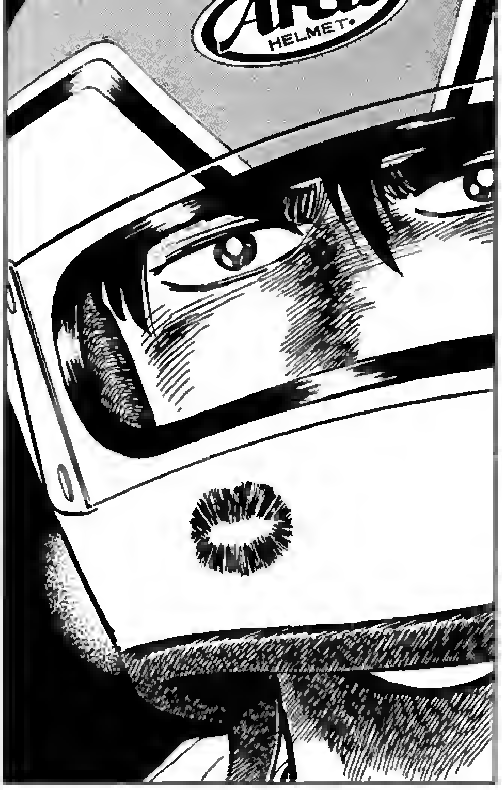

What are you...?
Wha...


Gunma?
Tamotsu, hand me that lipstick!
Should be right in front of the mirror!
Arai
GUNMA

!?
You two can't show her whatever Ryuji was looking at, can you?
Wait!
I oughta knock you out!
Get your hands off of Junko, you filthy son of a...!
BWAP
S-
Stop it...
Hold still!
From today on, you and me are partners!
Urgh...
That "mysterious something" you were talkin' about.
I'll show you...
...Junko.

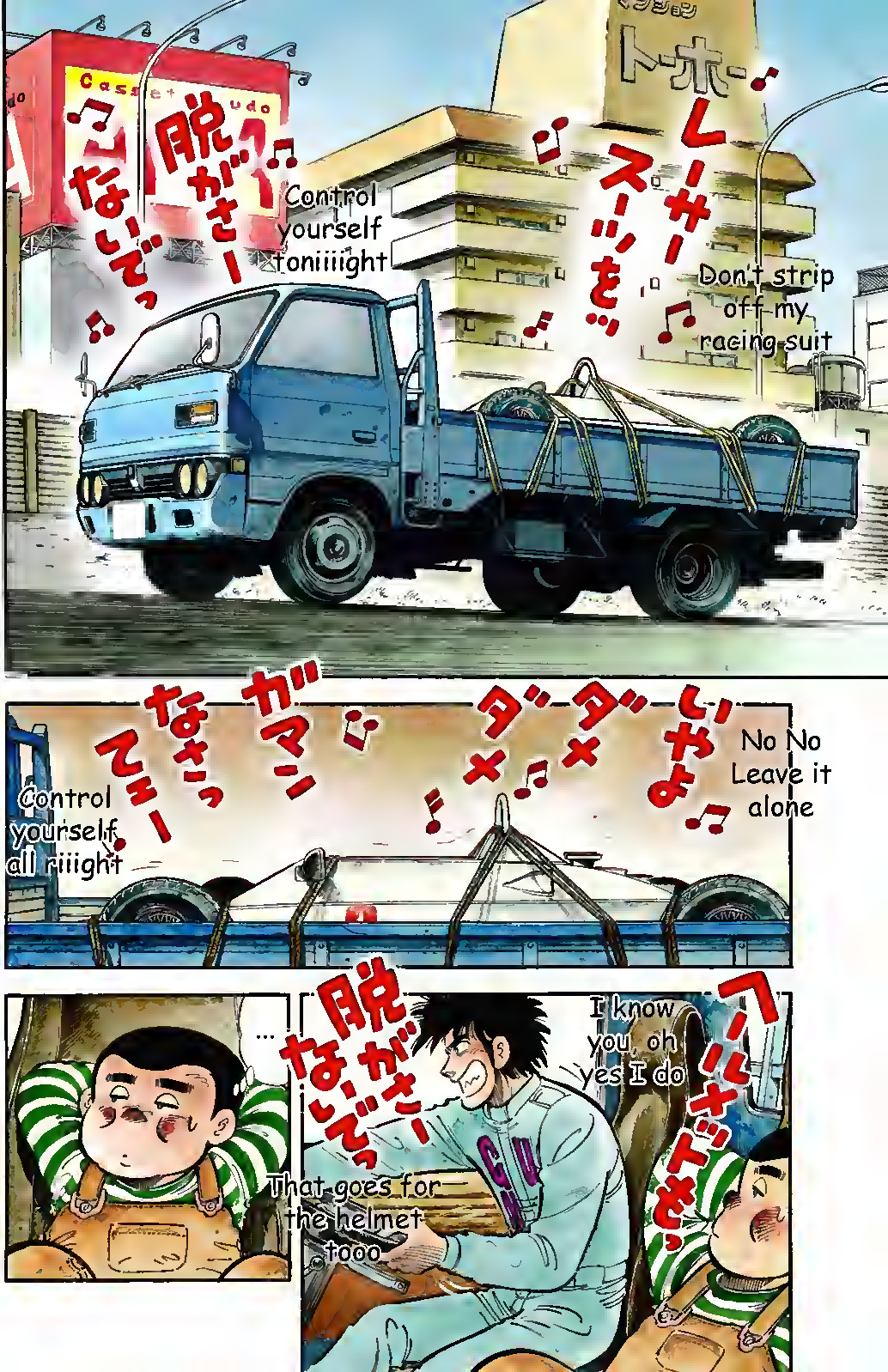


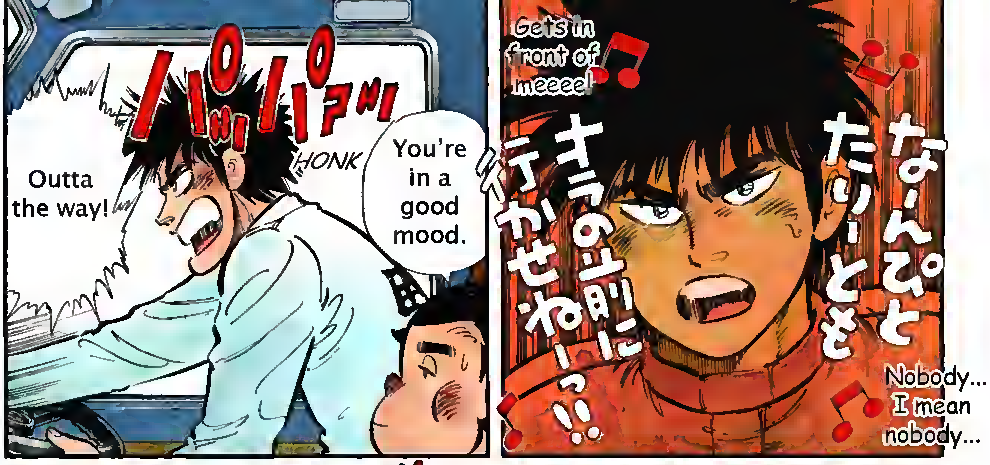

HEH

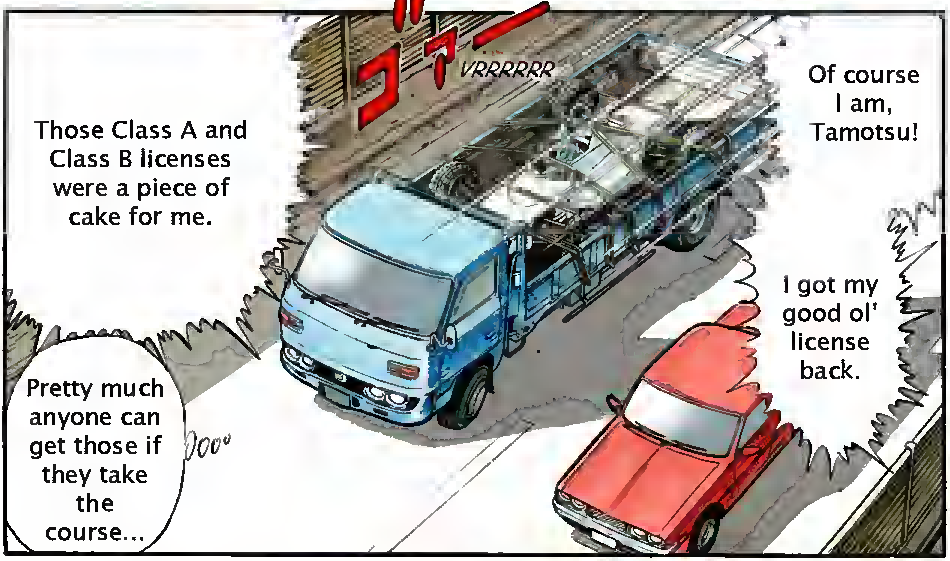

HELMET

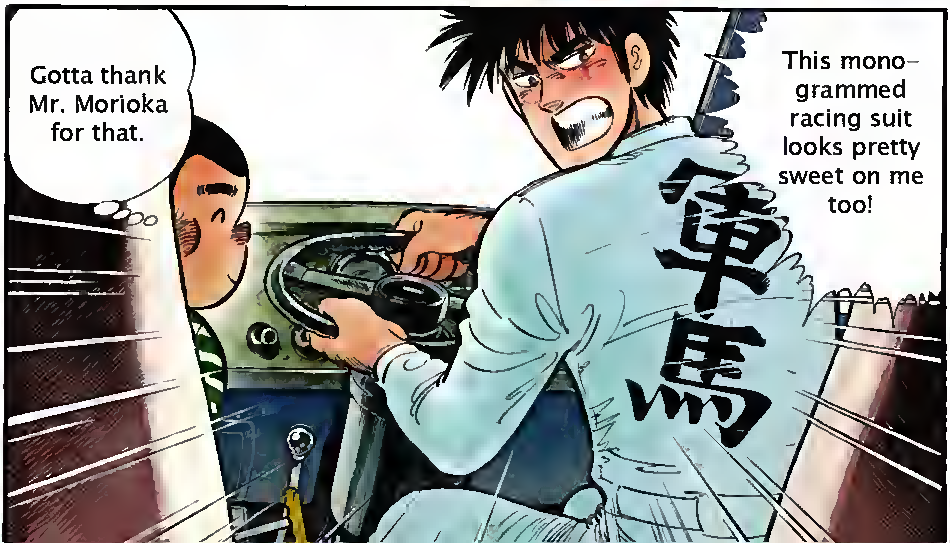
Okay...
...You show me then...!

GUNNM
Chapter 5:
Fledgling
LIAR
HORNDOG
SCUMBAG
10 YEN
PERSEVERANCE

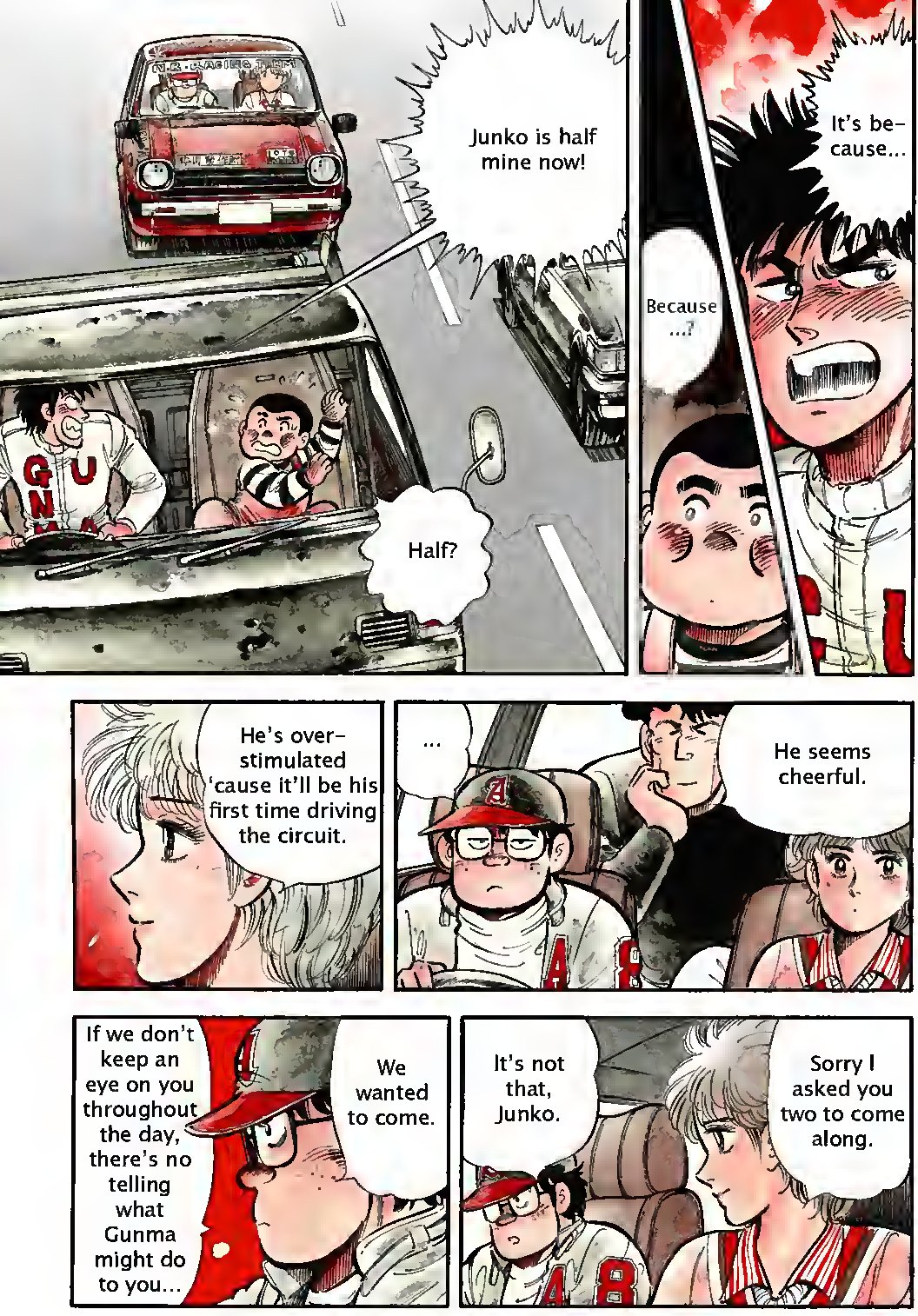

トホー♪
レーサースーツを…
Don't strip off my racing suit
脱がさーないでっ♪
Control yourself toniiiight
いやよ♪
ダメダメ♪
ガマンなさってぇー
No No Leave it alone
Control yourself all riiight
…
脱がさーないでっ
That goes for the helmet tooo
I know you, oh yes I do
ヘルメットを…

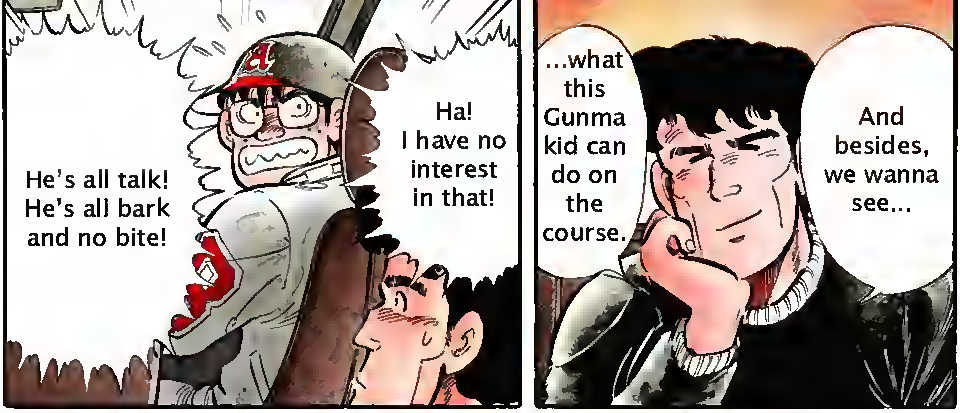

Outta the way!
HONK
You're in a good mood.
なんぴとたりーとを
Gets in front of meeee!
ヨラの前に行かせねーっ!!
Nobody... I mean nobody...

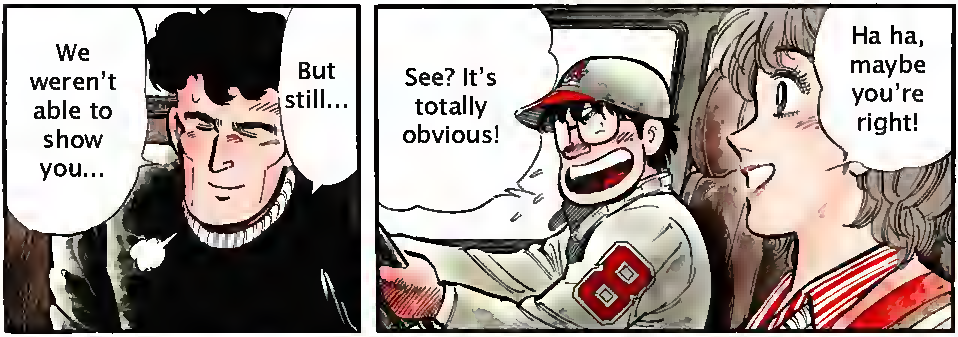

ゴォー
VRRRRRR
Those Class A and Class B licenses were a piece of cake for me.
Of course I am, Tamotsu!
I got my good ol' license back.
Pretty much anyone can get those if they take the course...

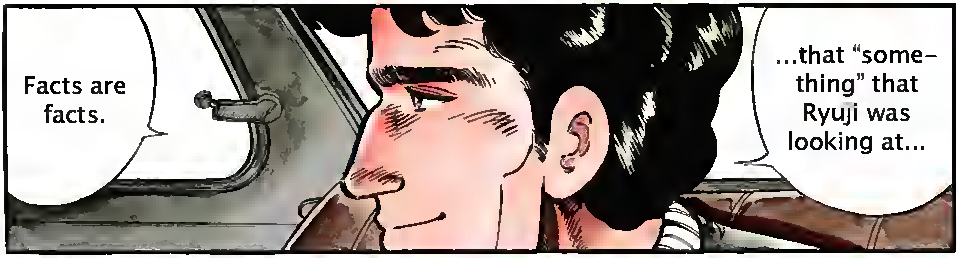

Gotta thank Mr. Morioka for that.
This mono-grammed racing suit looks pretty sweet on me too!
俥馬

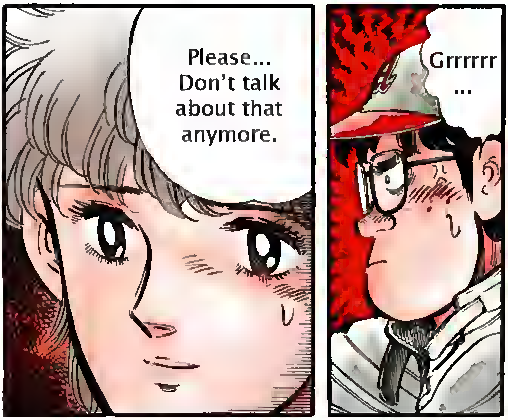
Whoa
Whoa
Whoa
Heh-heh!
なんちゃって!
ピース!
Peace!
GNMA
Dude! Grab the wheel!
...
N.R. RACING TE
...
ゴゴゴ
VROOH
...What!?
And there's one more reason I'm in a good mood!

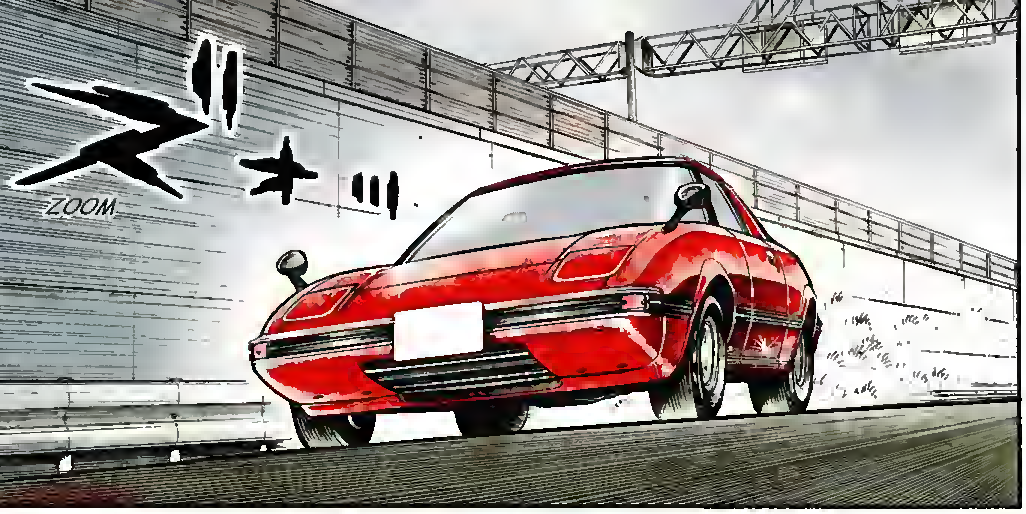

Junko is half mine now!
Half?
It's be-cause...
Because ...?
He's over-stimulated 'cause it'll be his first time driving the circuit.
...
He seems cheerful.
If we don't keep an eye on you throughout the day, there's no telling what Gunma might do to you...
We wanted to come.
It's not that, Junko.
Sorry I asked you two to come along.

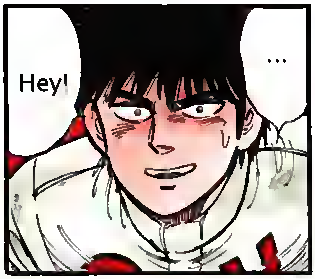

He's all talk! He's all bark and no bite!
Ha! I have no interest in that!
...what this Gunma kid can do on the course.
And besides, we wanna see...

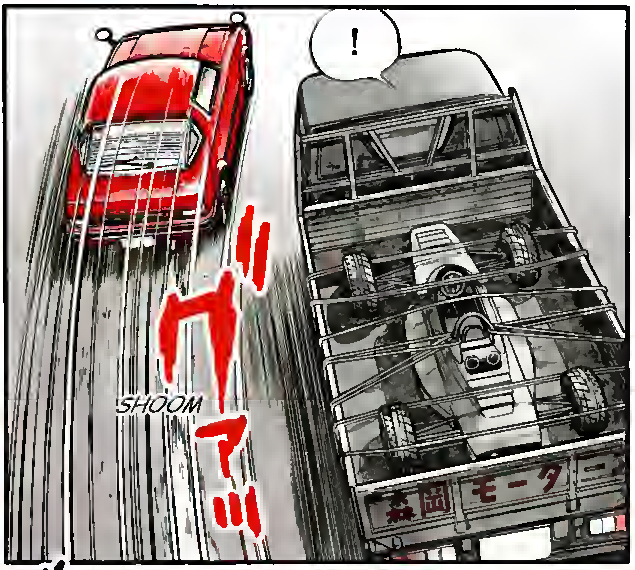

We weren't able to show you...
But still...
See? It's totally obvious!
Ha ha, maybe you're right!


Facts are facts.
...that "something" that Ryuji was looking at...


Please... Don't talk about that anymore.
Grrrrrr...
Something tells me we can count on this kid to turn something up.
I'm pretty curious what Ryuji was looking at myself.


ZOOM


Hey!
...


!
SHOOM
森岡モータ

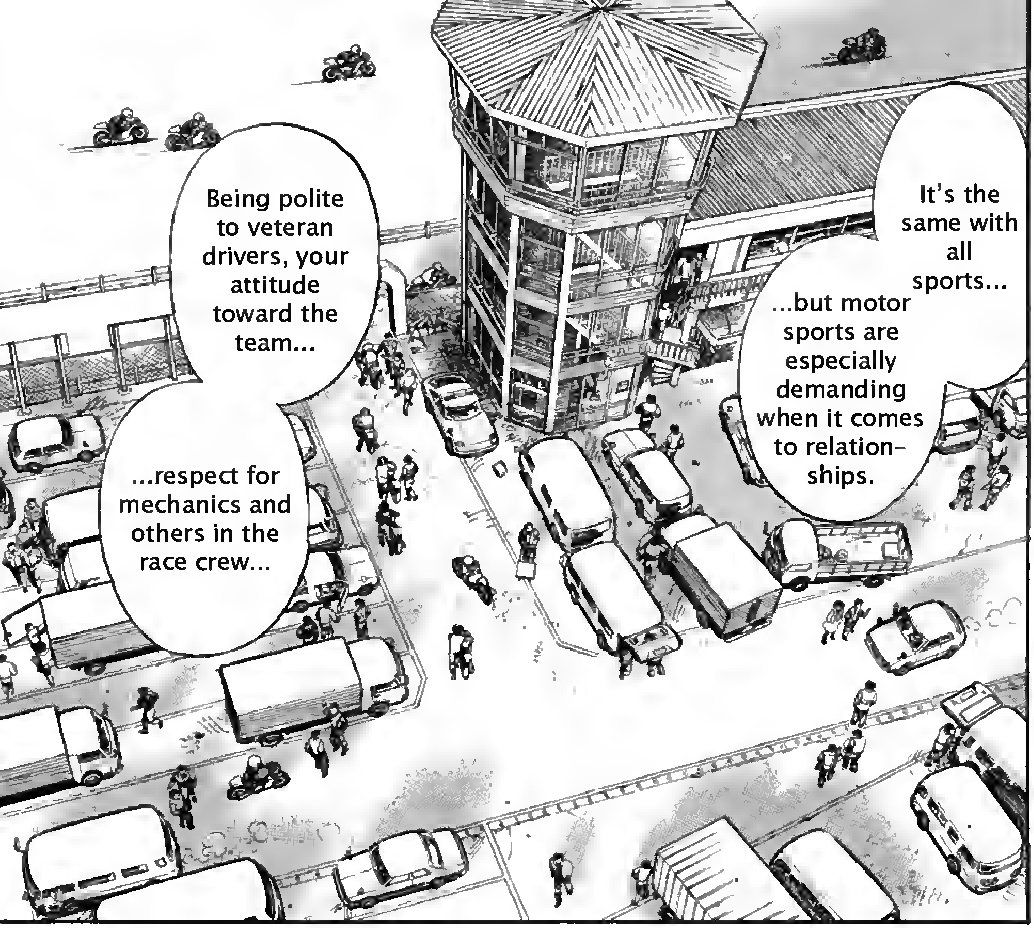
Hey now!
Whoa now!

PLUG

GRUP
Nobody ...
WOOSH

You cocky son of a gun, you!
That Savanna RX-7!

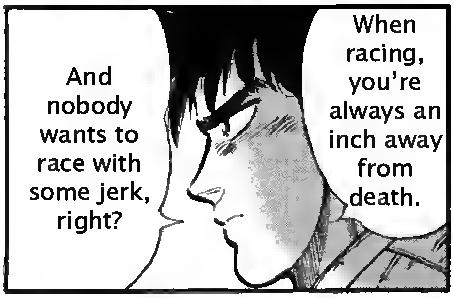
Drive at a normal speed for now.
Gunma, I wanna talk to you before we get to the circuit.
What's the idea jammin' yer foot under the pedal!?
GNMA
Tamo-tsu...
Gunma... I gotta tell you about the circuit rules...
Tamotsu, you little...!
Oh man ...
Look at that ...
The Savanna got away.
What the hell is that!?
The circuit is built on relationships with other people.
It's important, so don't forget this.
Say what?

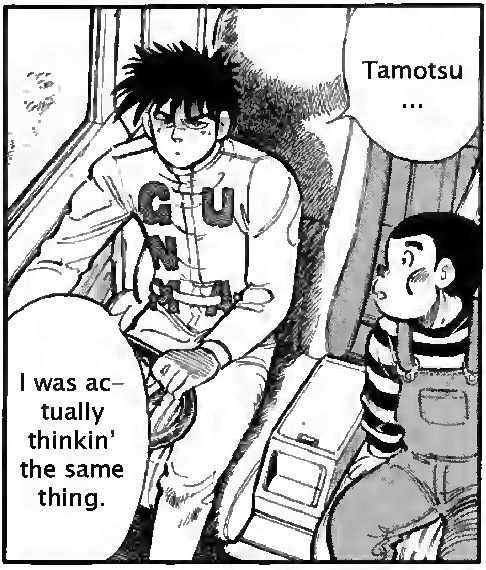

Being polite to veteran drivers, your attitude toward the team...
...respect for mechanics and others in the race crew...
It's the same with all sports...
...but motor sports are especially demanding when it comes to relationships.

Everyone puts their life on the line to compete in this sport.
That's why it's important to consider the humanity of the people you race against.
Get what I'm saying?

If you're not on top of that, racing won't be fun anymore.
And eventually, you won't be able to race at all.

Yeah, that's what I mean, Gunma.
Basically, yer tellin' me to be a gentleman.

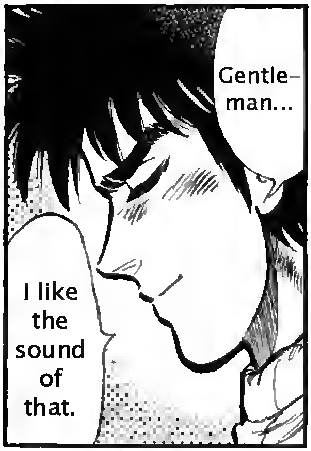

When racing, you're always an inch away from death.
And nobody wants to race with some jerk, right?


Tamotsu ...
I was actually thinkin' the same thing.

Wow...
Does he really get it?
じわー
WHOA

Wow... he's really serious...

I think it fits me to a tee actually.

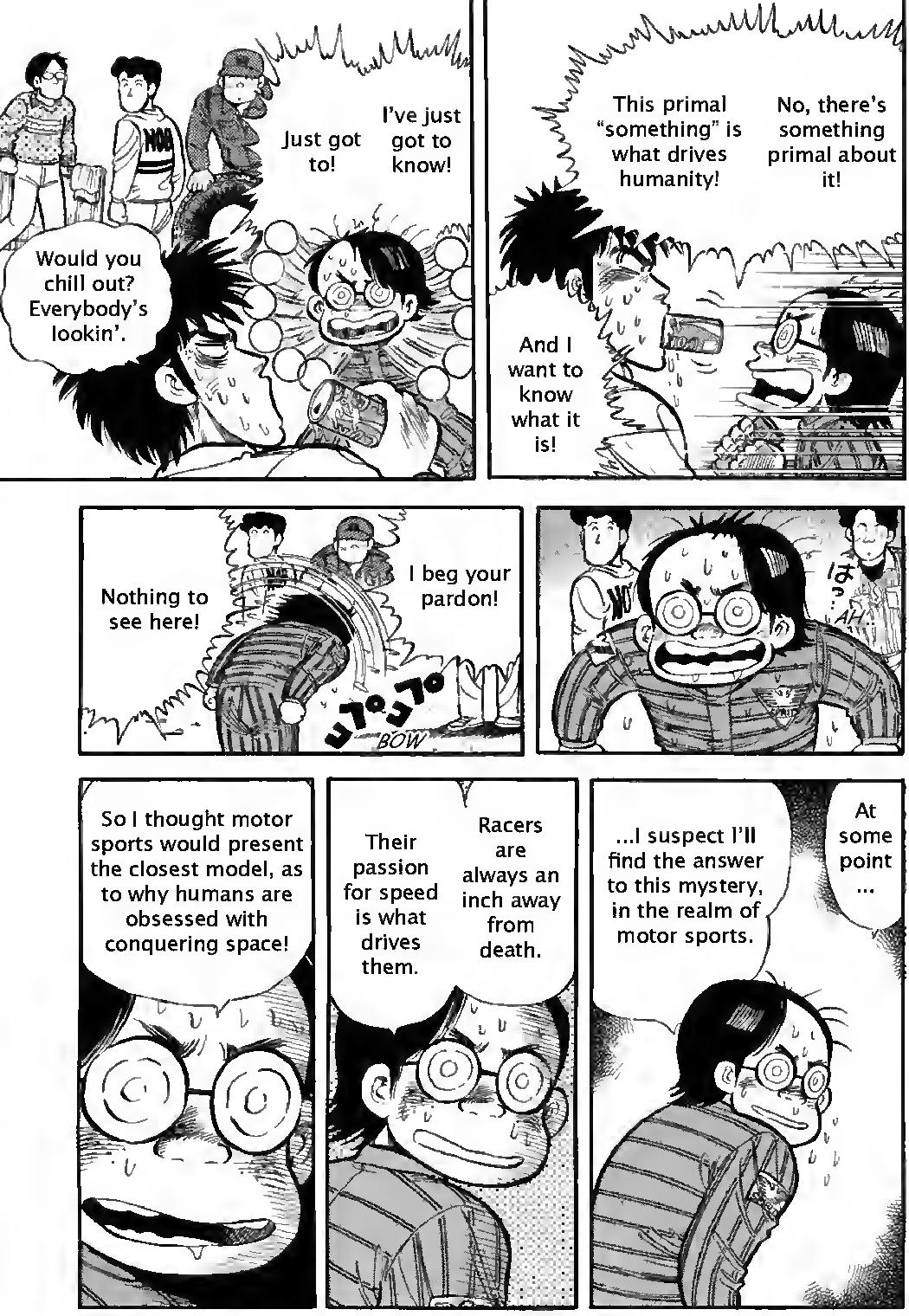

Gentleman...
I like the sound of that.

* Adjust alignment = Adjust tire balance, etc.

BRAANG
TAKEDA
What's up his butt?
Hmm...
BRAANG
Doesn't sound right.
And why's a motorbike practicin' here?
Stop eatin' cabbage. Works for me!
Just a little gas problem.
IZAWA
Hey, dude! Somethin' wrong?
BREH BREH BREH
Um... Excuse me?
HEH HEH HEH
軍馬

Sorry, I uh... I'm just looking for a restroom, but...
What's up?
SWING
SHIMMER
...
Well, yes.
You're a rookie, aren't you?
Tsu-kuba's changed.
Wow ...
What the hell are you jerks doing!?
POK
GUN
Oh, okay.
We don't use "rest-rooms" in Tsukuba. Shows me you're new here!
TRICKLE
TRICKLE

I thought you might think that!
You don't look like a racer to me.
Plus I'm near-sighted
Maybe you're right.
Uh-huh... Have a drink.
Oh, so you're here for FJ too, huh?
I'm studying psychology in college...
I've always been highly interested in the psychological structure of humans in relation to space...
...and I wrote about it extensively in my thesis.
Basically, why do people always try to conquer space!?
PUK
The mountains, the sky, the sea, and all the way into outer space!
Humans never cease in their obsession to conquer space!
But why!? Answers like intellectual curiosity, or sportsmanship, just don't do it for me!
...
What's up with him...


Would you chill out? Everybody's lookin'.
Just got to!
I've just got to know!
And I want to know what it is!
This primal "something" is what drives humanity!
No, there's something primal about it!
Nothing to see here!
I beg your pardon!
BOW
AH...
So I thought motor sports would present the closest model, as to why humans are obsessed with conquering space!
Their passion for speed is what drives them.
Racers are always an inch away from death.
...I suspect I'll find the answer to this mystery, in the realm of motor sports.
At some point ...

...
I saw a restaurant where we came in.
Huh?
You hungry ...?
And before I knew it, I bought myself a race car.
From the eyes of a veteran!
That sounds great!
If you insist.
I'll tell ya all about the circuit rules while we eat.
Since I'm the rookie here, let me treat you!
...?
Funny... I've never heard of him...
Think of me as the fastest man in the circuit.
I'm Gunma Akagi.
My name's Hideo Kishida by the way.

How many years have you been in the FJ?
Plenty.
MUNCH
You gotta do whatever we say.
That's the gentleman thing to do.
MUNCH
MUNCH
First of all, veteran racers are like gods around here.
But the name Akagi never came up.
I've checked all the race records from last year and the year before, in magazines.
Huh?
Did you take some time off?
...
...
That's Hijiri!
CLATTER
Oh!
Hey, look at that hot chick!
GUN

Not the girl. It's the guy with her!
You know that chick?
Kazuto Hijiri... He's been champion for two years now. Last year and the year before!
His picture's all over the magazines. Weird...
You don't know Hijiri?
Wait. A Savanna?
He's always among the top racers. See him getting out of the red Savanna?
And there's Sunai!

Mr. Hijiri, Mr. Sunai! It's an honor to meet you both! I'm Kishida. Just started racing this year!
ガタッ
CLATTER
あはは
HA HA HA
カラン
DING
Geez, you practically gave me a heart attack.
Sunai, huh? That's the jerk who passed me up in that Savanna.
It's a Maxim. An older model...
It's a pleasure, and I hope you'll take it easy on us. What kind of car you got?
...
すー
SHOOM
Oh, he's uh...
Is he your team-mate?

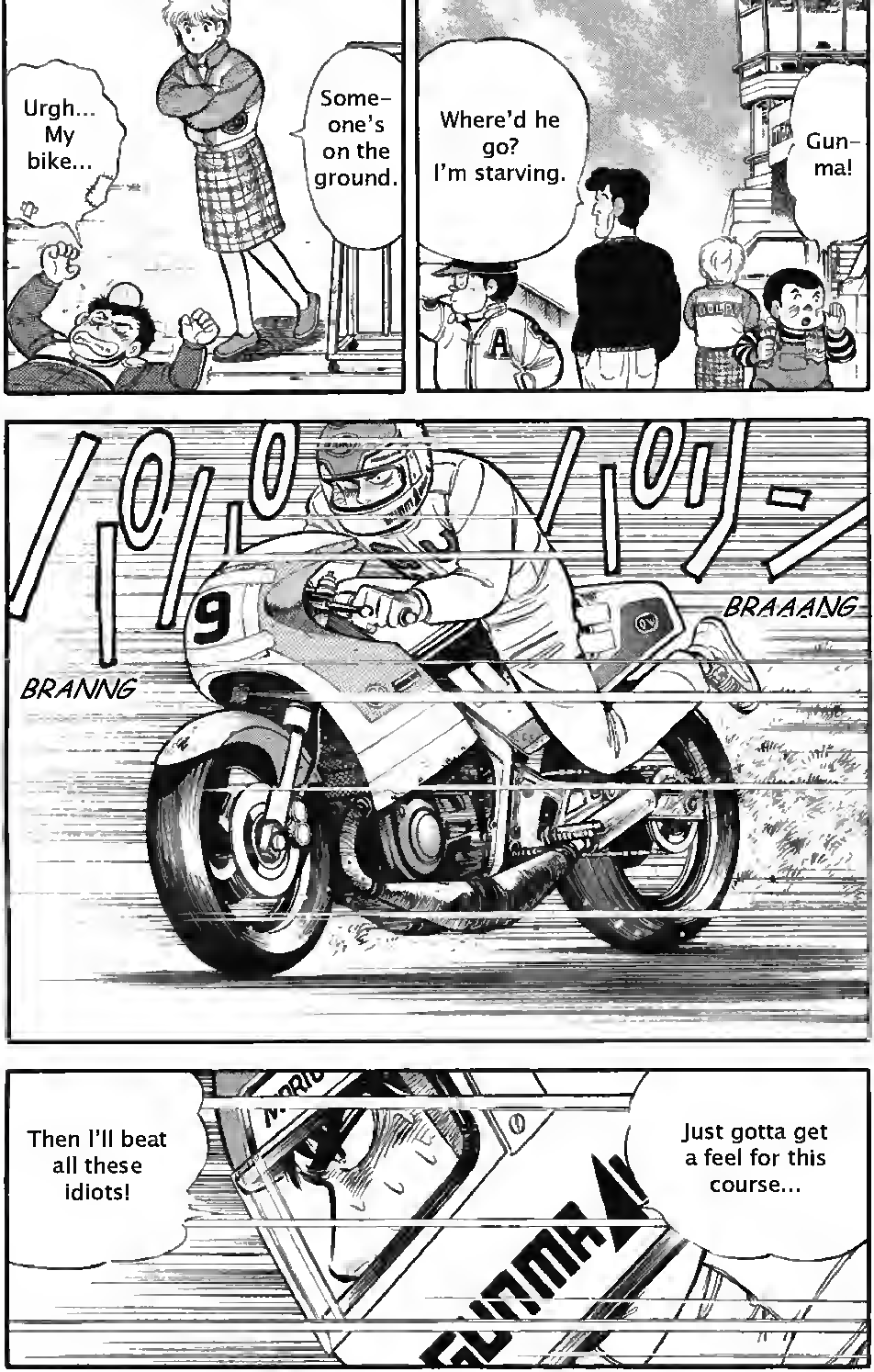
Gets in front of me!
But I... got this thing that... Nobody...
No-bod-y ...
I'm a... racer myself.
N-name's Gunma Akagi.
GUNMA
カク SHAKE
Anyway, nice to meet ya'll and all that...
ポカン
HM?
...
Looks like you had fun passin' up my truck on the road, but you'll never pass me up on the circuit!
WOOSH
Especially this jerk with the Savanna!
I am so looking forward to this!
軍馬
Damn straight!
Now that you mention it, I did pass up a truck with a Bellco in the back. That was you?

Just havin' a little fun.
Leave him alone, Sunai.
Hold on a minute, kid.
You must be able to talk more respectful than that.
What?
'Kay?
If you're gonna start racing this year...
...at least get the greeting right.
Knock it off!
This guy ...
...
You gotta problem with that!?
I said it like a freakin' gentleman!

What are you so riled up for, Sunai?
S...sorry about that, Hijiri.
SHPAK
And you need to chill out too.
He's just a fledgling with big dreams and no experience.
That's not like you.
!!
You dirty son of a...!

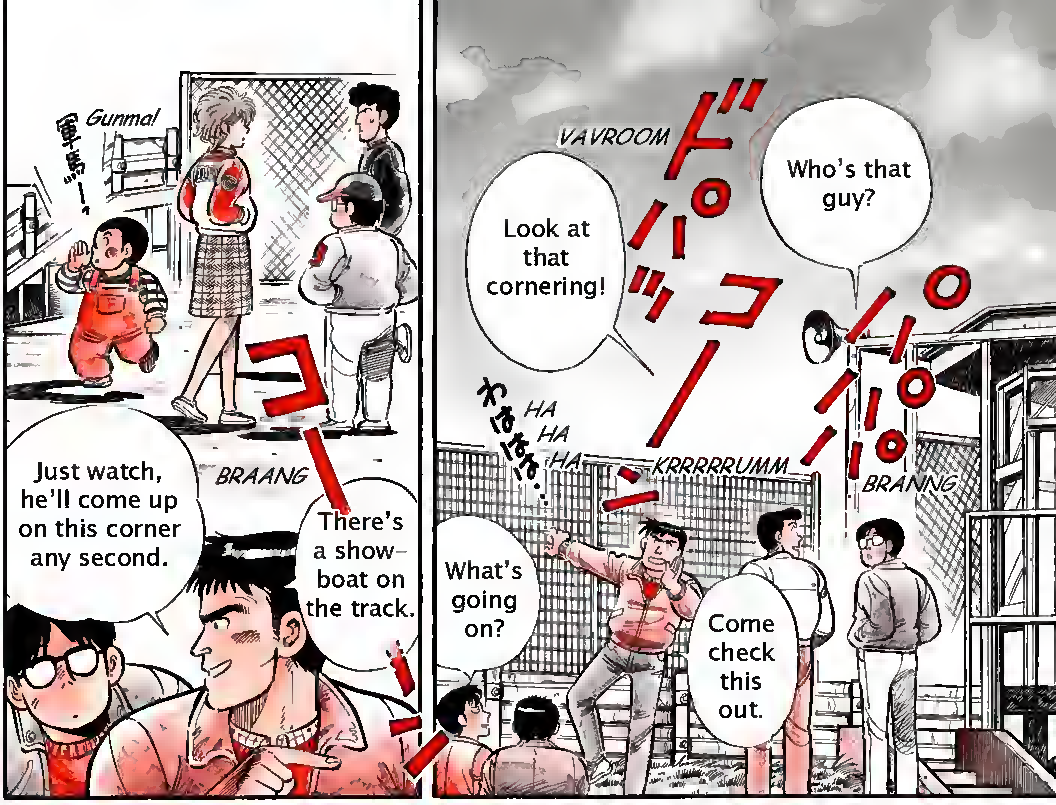
SLAM
YANK
Or your life gets miserable real fast.
Save it for the track, kid...
He's... so cool!
KATAAANG
Hmph!

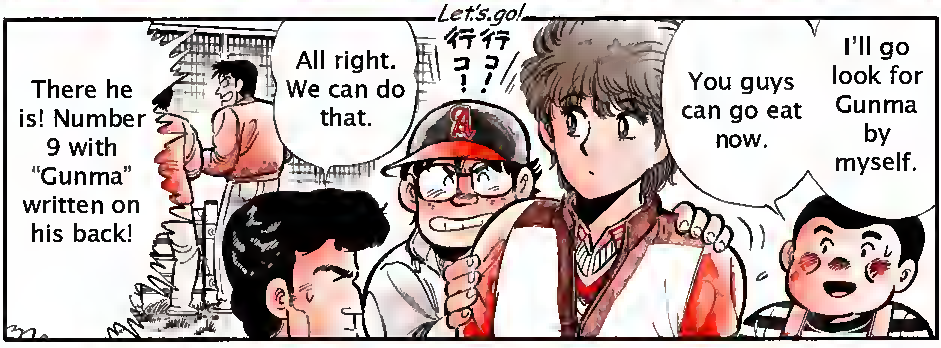
Grrrr...
PATUNG TUN TUN
BRR
BRROOM
Thinkin' he's all that...
Damn that Hijiri!
Alright! Much better!
BRRROOM
BRROOOM
Who are...
Wha ...
Hey, sounds pretty fine now!
I'll test it out for ya!


Urgh... My bike...
Some-one's on the ground.
Where'd he go? I'm starving.
Gun-ma!
BRANING
BRAAANG
Then I'll beat all these idiots!
Just gotta get a feel for this course...

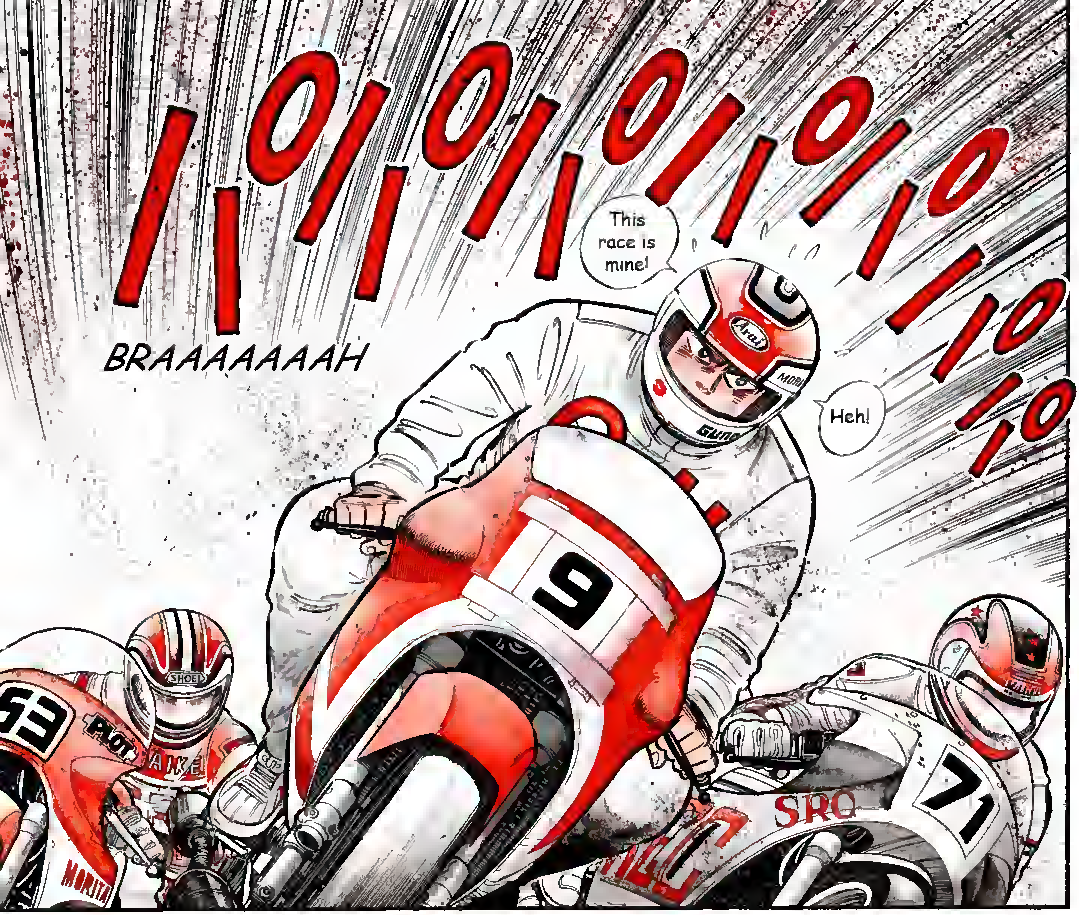
F
Vol.2

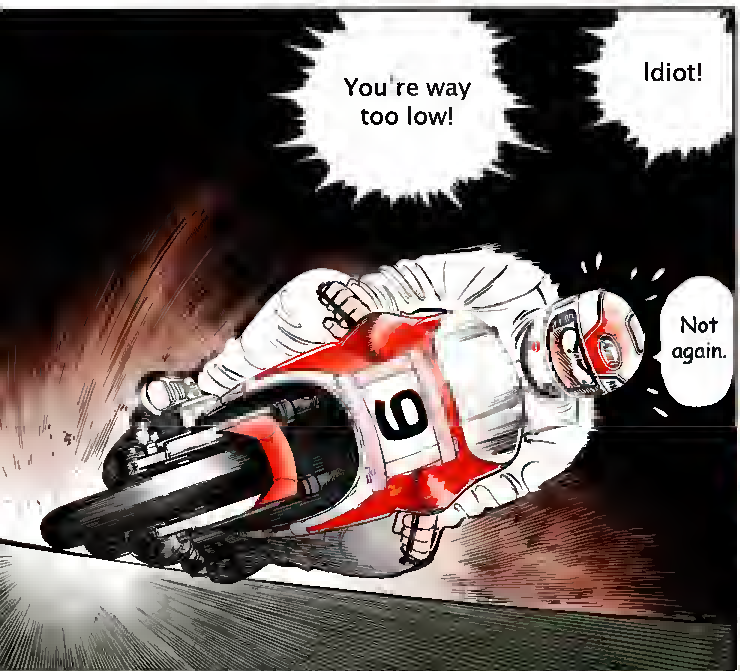
Chapter 6: Major Malfunction

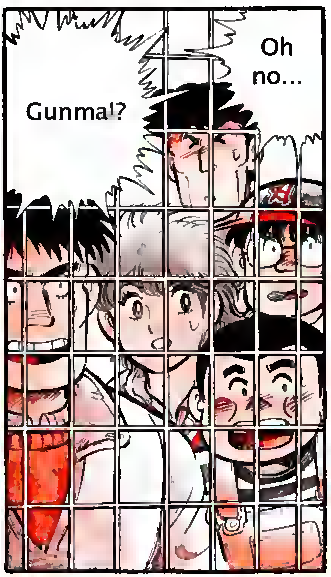


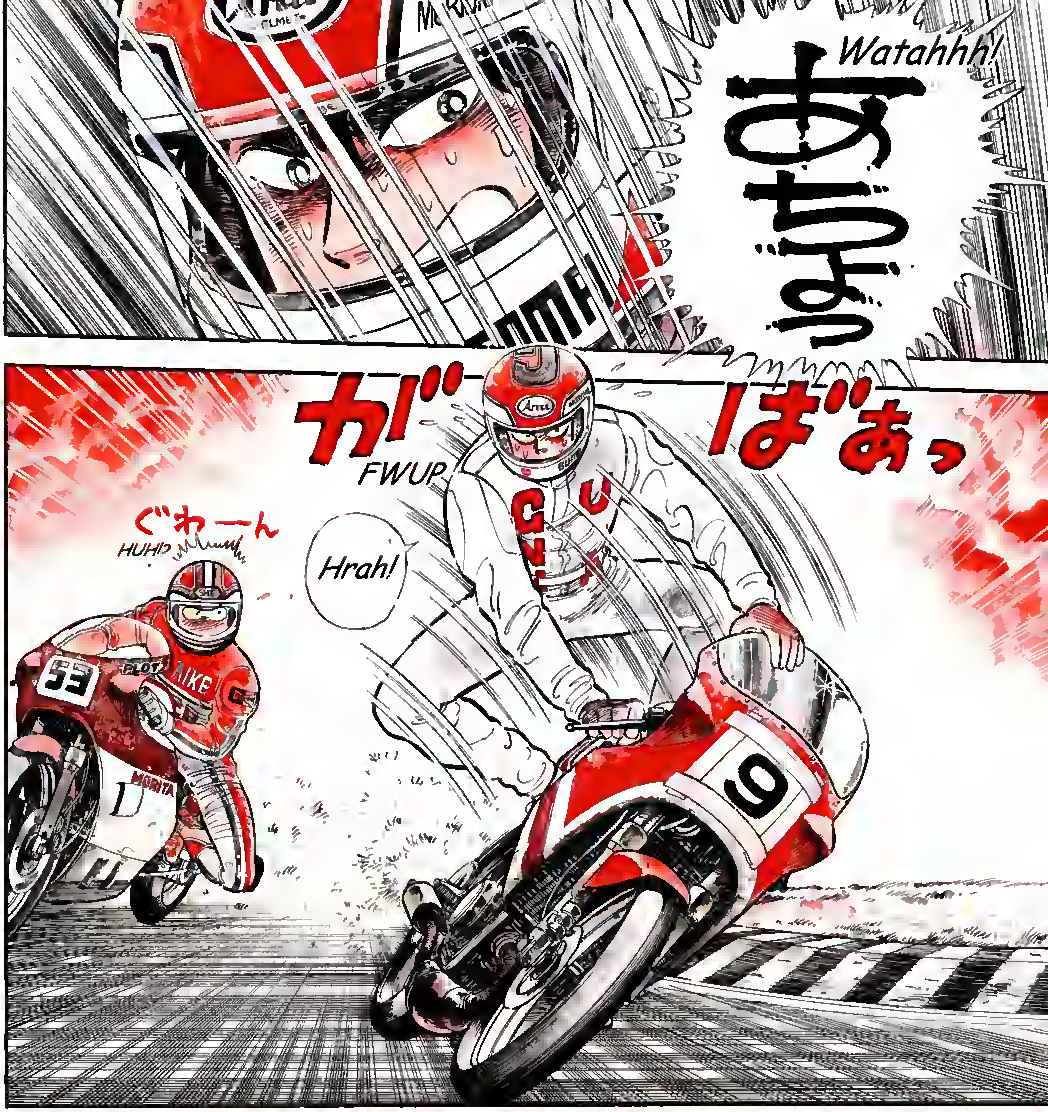


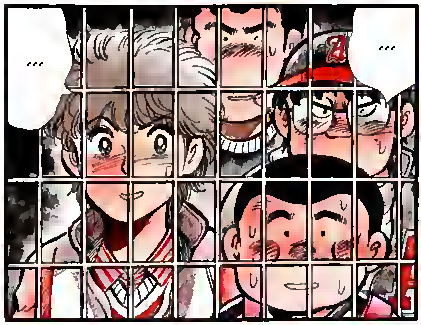
* Hang off = A leaning technique for clearing turns at high speed.

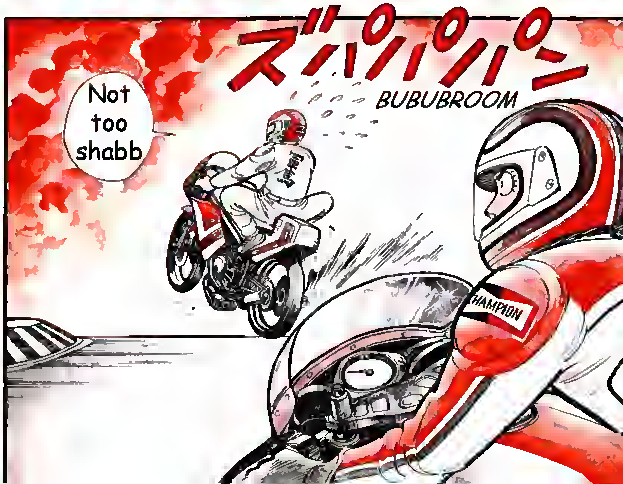

BRAAAAAAAH
This race is mine!
Heh!
9
SHOEI
PILOT
MARUTI
SRC
71

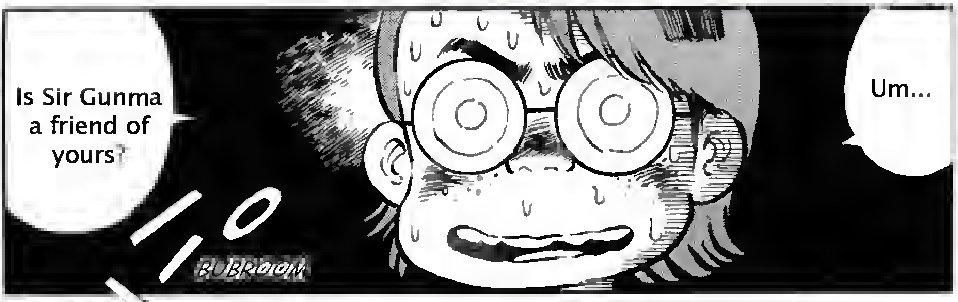

You're way too low!
Idiot!
Not again.
9

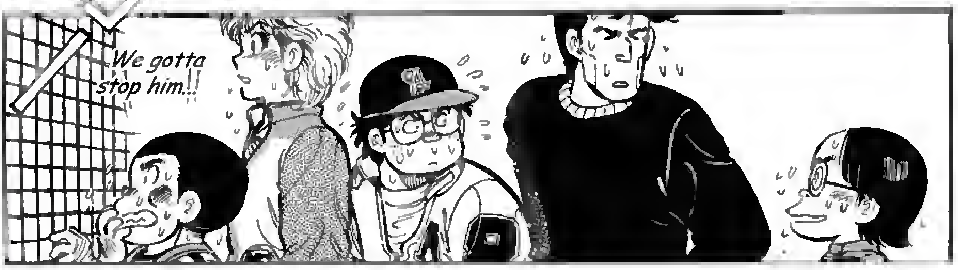

Oh no...
Gunma!?

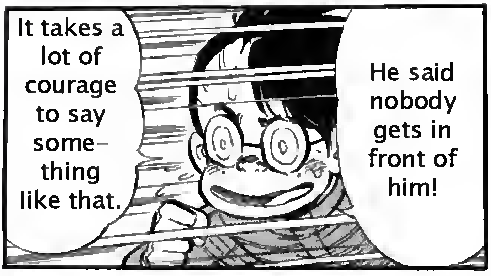

Watahhh!
あちょっ
カ゛
FWUP
ば゛あっ
ぐわーん
HUH!?
Hrah!
33
MORITA
9

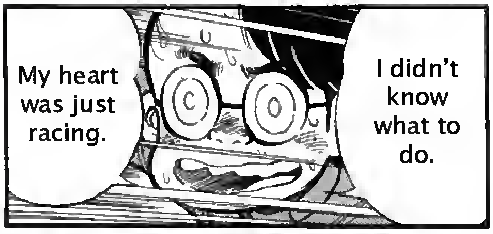

...
...

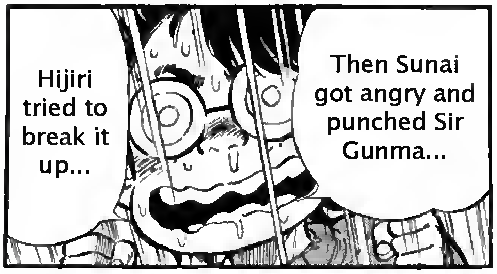

ズパパパパーン
BUBUBROOM
Not too shabb
CHAMPION

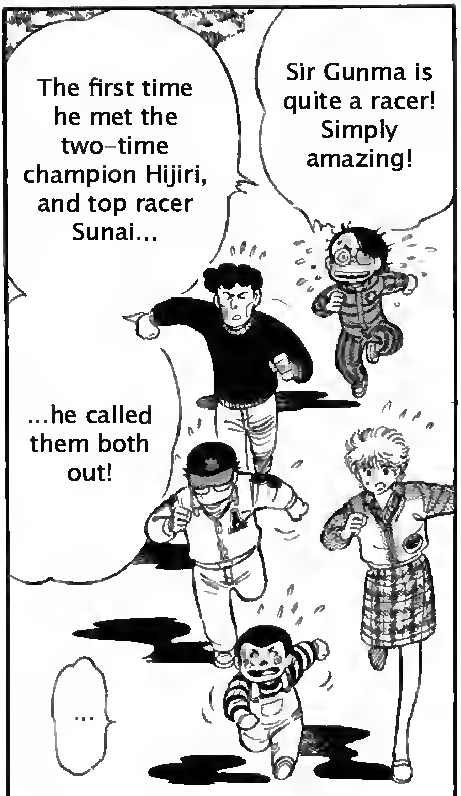

Is Sir Gunma a friend of yours?
Um...
BUBBBOOM


We gotta stop him!!


It takes a lot of courage to say some-thing like that.
He said nobody gets in front of him!


My heart was just racing.
I didn't know what to do.


Hijiri tried to break it up...
Then Sunai got angry and punched Sir Gunma...


The first time he met the two-time champion Hijiri, and top racer Sunai...
Sir Gunma is quite a racer! Simply amazing!
...he called them both out!
...

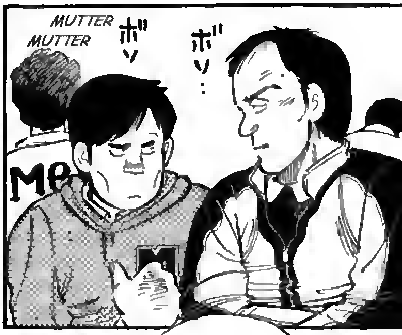
Hijiri is the epitome of cool...
Wowww
...
"Save it for the track, kid. Or your life gets miserable real fast."
And Hijiri said something that was so cool!
Sir Gunma's the one who really impressed me for some reason.
But ...
Am I in love?
BLUSH
...
That dirty scumbag!
Right.
Let's just get Gunma off the course.
Whew!
BRUH
BRUH
BRUH

Then give it to me!
What good is it now? I don't have time to practice!
Seriously!
You must be nuts!
Just borrowed it, man! It'll all yours now!
You idiot! How can you just take my bike like that?
You oughta pay for this!
'Sup!
What kind of person just...
Sir Gunma!
Gun-ma!
...
IDIOT!
OUCH!
CRASHHH
Urgh ...

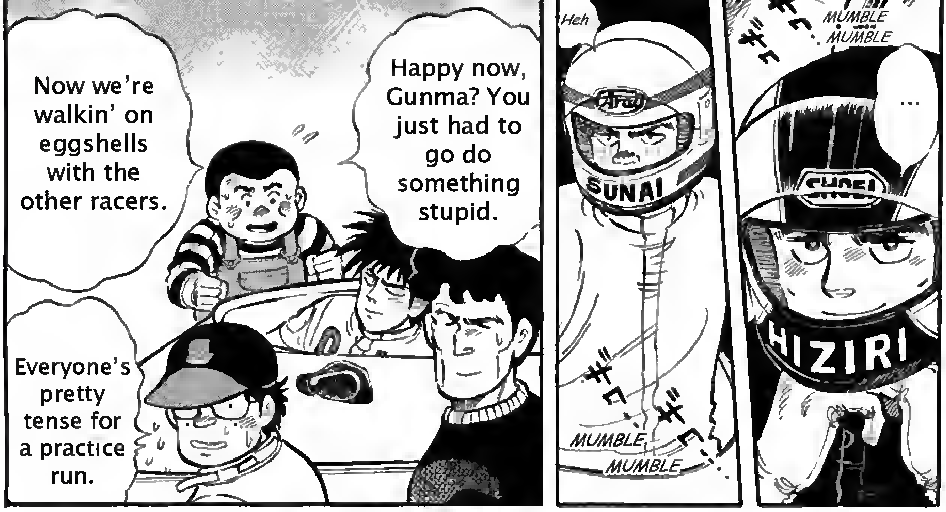
VICTORY
VRRRRR
VROOOOM
VROOM
JRT
32
71
86

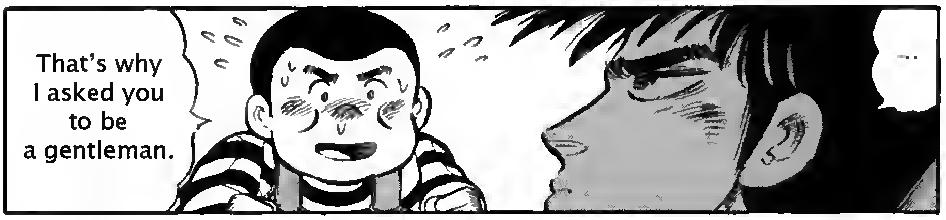
It's him.

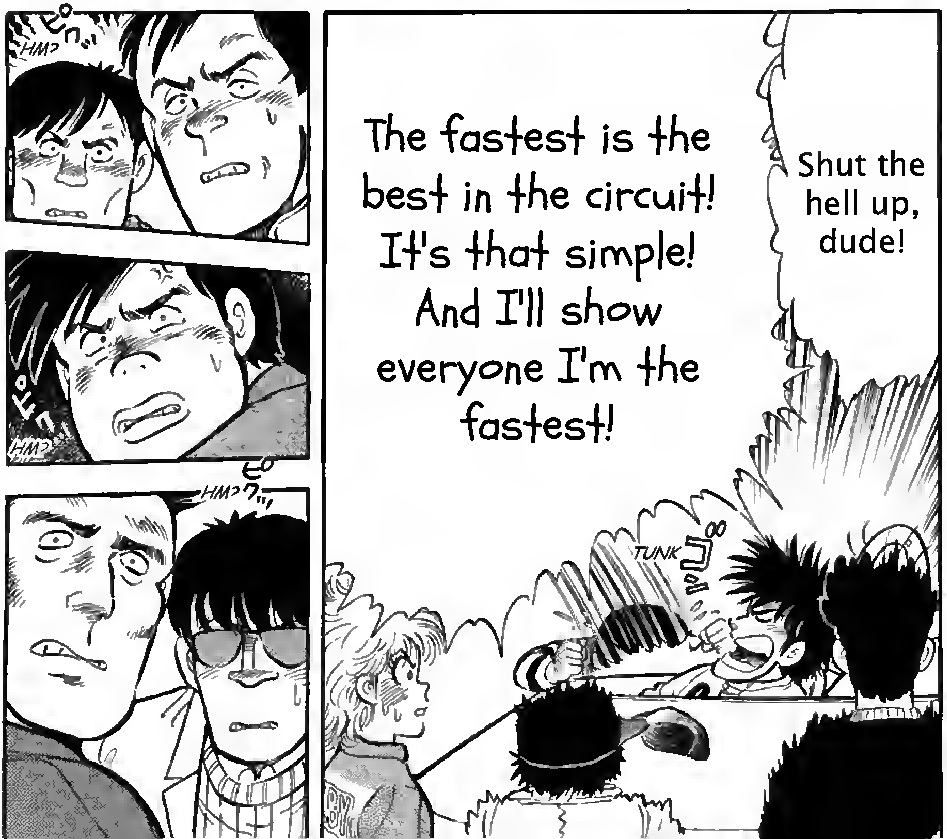
MUTTER
MUTTER
MUTTER

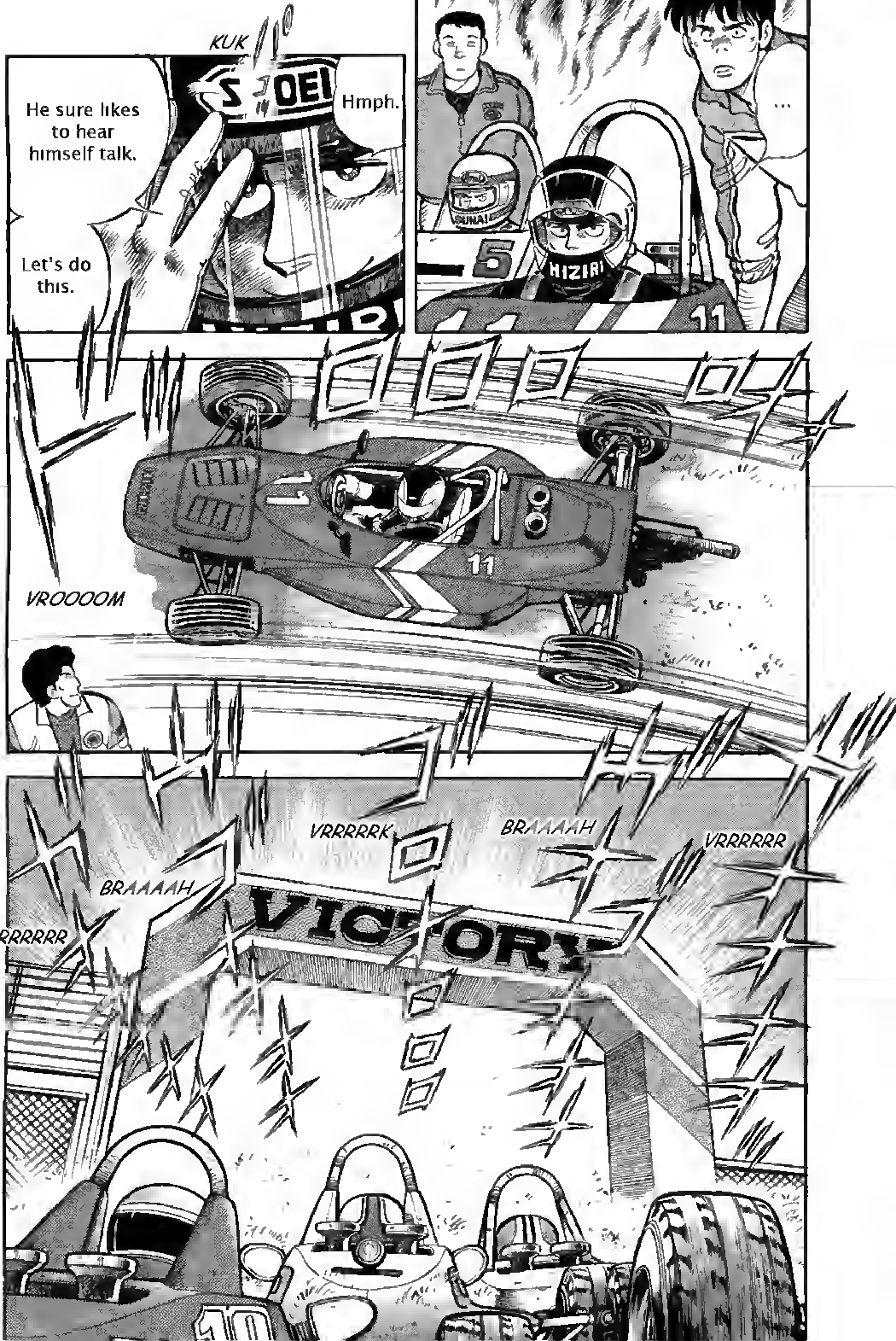

MUTTER
MUTTER

He has no respect for the sport.
MUTTER
MUTTER
MUTTER
You got that right.
MUTTER
That moron who snapped at Hijiri and Sunai. He's got no manners...
DOLBY

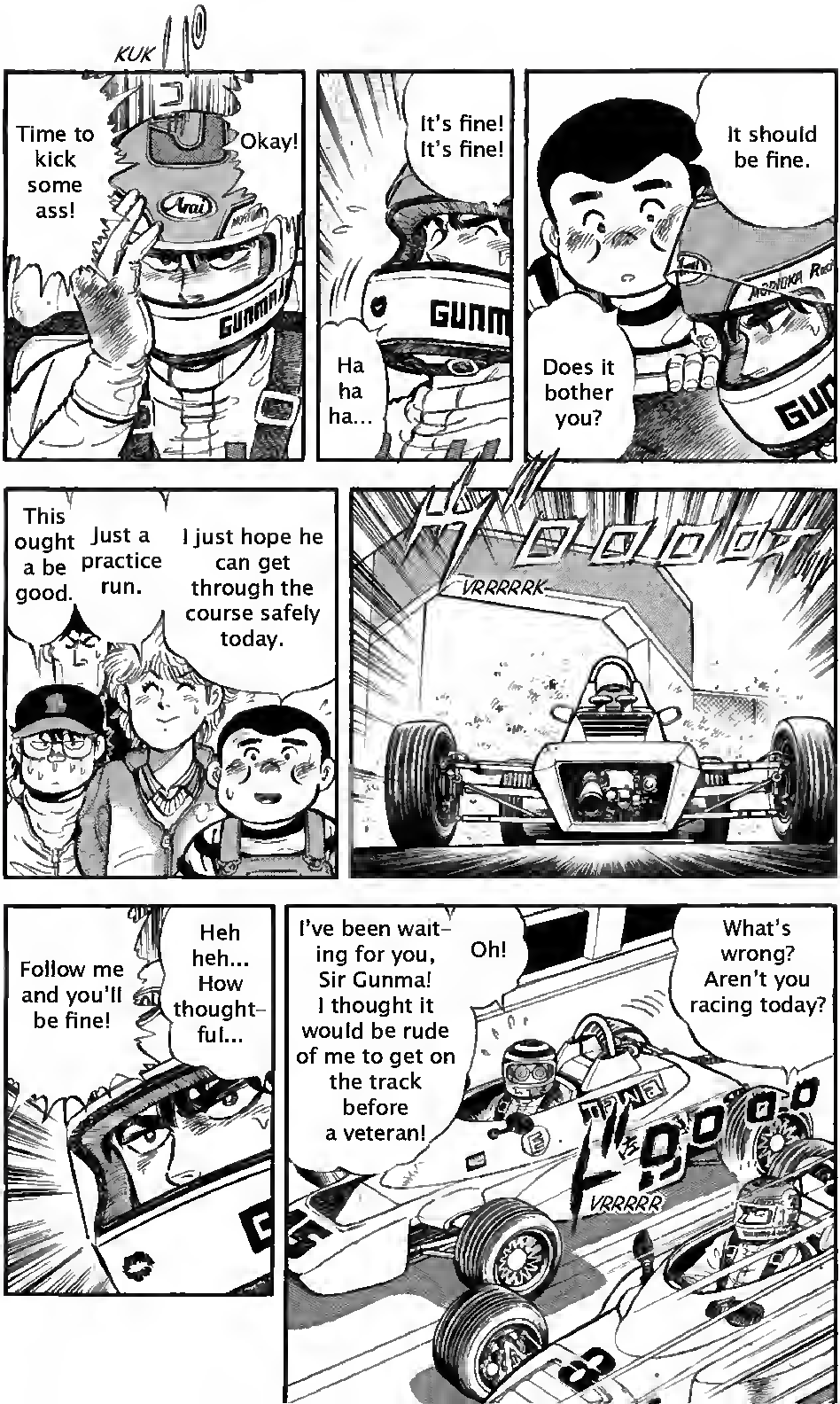

Now we're walkin' on eggshells with the other racers.
Happy now, Gunma? You just had to go do something stupid.
Everyone's pretty tense for a practice run.
Heh
SUNAI
MUMBLE MUMBLE
MUMBLE MUMBLE
...
HIZIRI


That's why I asked you to be a gentleman.
...

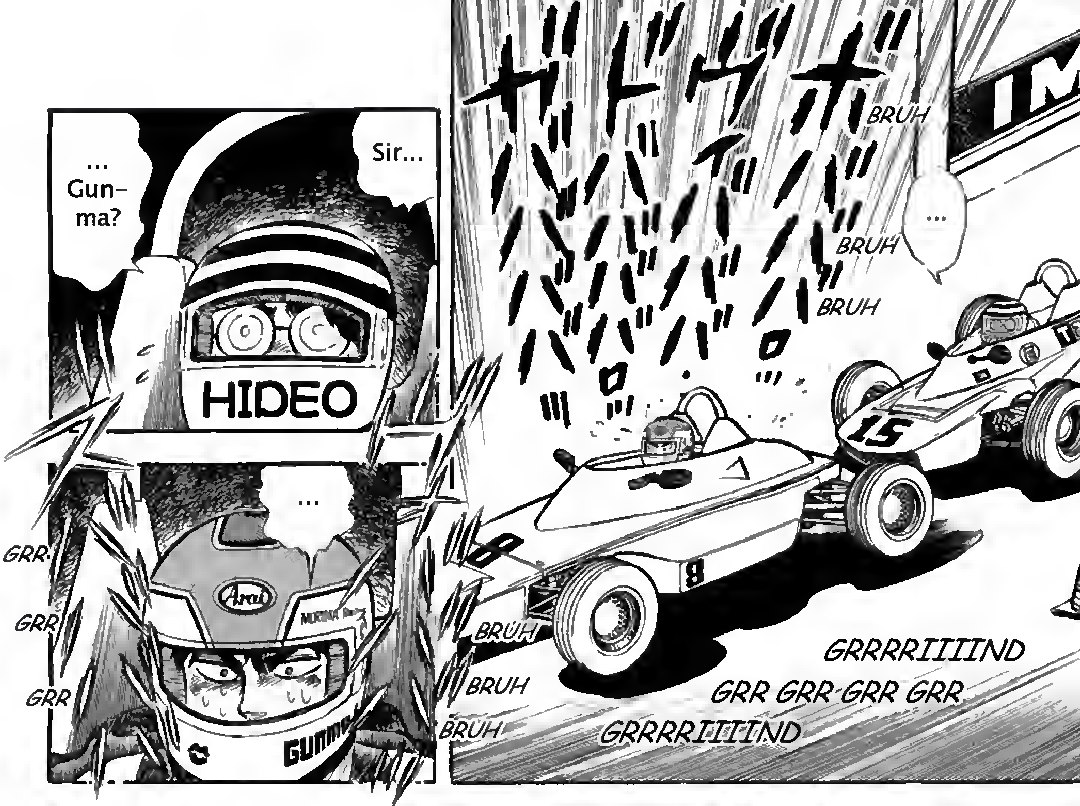

HM?
HM?
HM?
The fastest is the best in the circuit! It's that simple! And I'll show everyone I'm the fastest!
Shut the hell up, dude!
TUNK

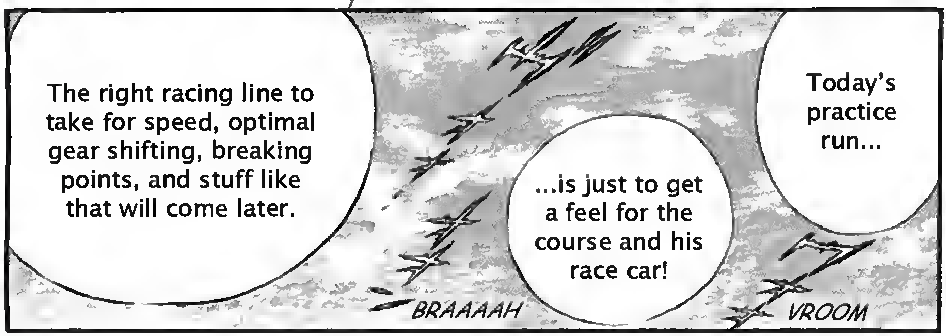

KUK
He sure likes to hear himself talk.
Hmph.
Let's do this.
...
5
HIZIRI
11
VROOOOM
11
VRRRRRK
BRAAAAH
VRRRRRR
BRAAAAH
VRRRRRRR
VICTORY
10

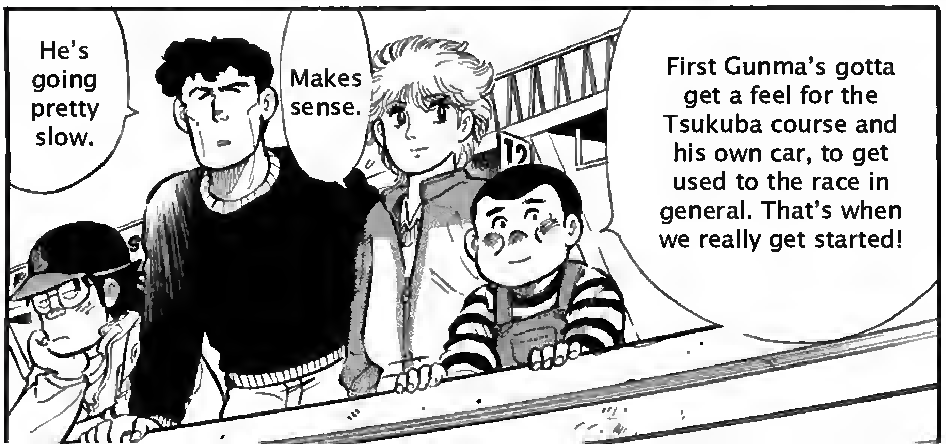
BRIDGESTONE
ZOOOOOM
IMPUL
IMPUL
KAVROOOM
CITIZEN
BRIDGESTONE
...
VRRRRRR
VRRRRRR
What?
The clutch feels tight.
Let's get out there.
Tamo-tsu...


KUK
Time to kick some ass!
Okay!
It's fine! It's fine!
Ha ha ha...
It should be fine.
Does it bother you?
This ought a be good.
Just a practice run.
I just hope he can get through the course safely today.
VRRRRRK
Follow me and you'll be fine!
Heh heh... How thought-ful...
I've been wait-ing for you, Sir Gunma! I thought it would be rude of me to get on the track before a veteran!
Oh!
What's wrong? Aren't you racing today?
VRRRRR

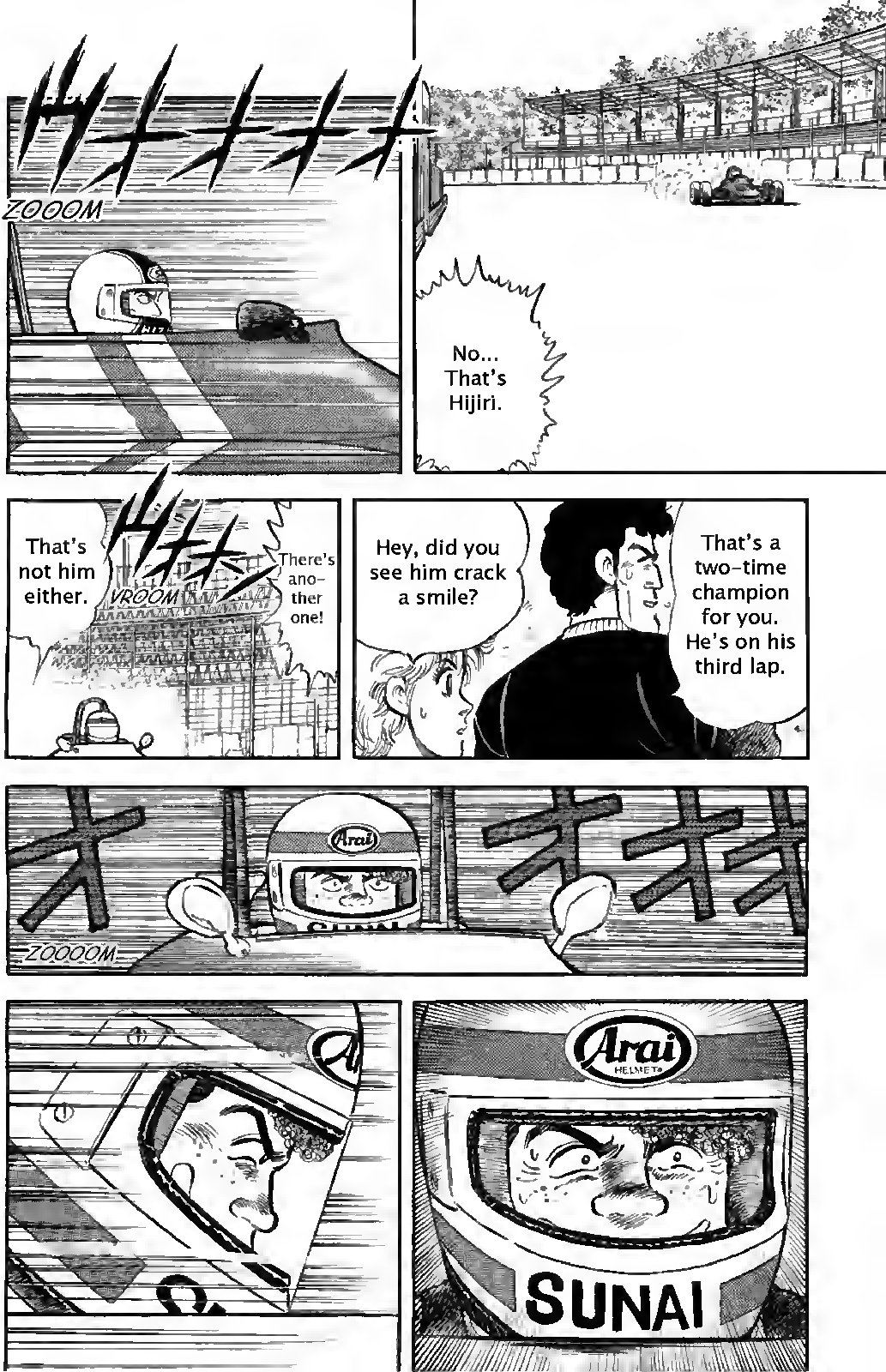
VRRRR
15
VRROOOM
VRRRRR
Wow!
What
a sound!
HIDEO


... Gun-ma?
Sir...
HIDEO
...
GRR
GRR
GRR
BRUH
BRUH
BRUH
BRUH
BRUH
...
15
GRRRRIIIIND
GRR GRR GRR GRR
GRRRRIIIIND

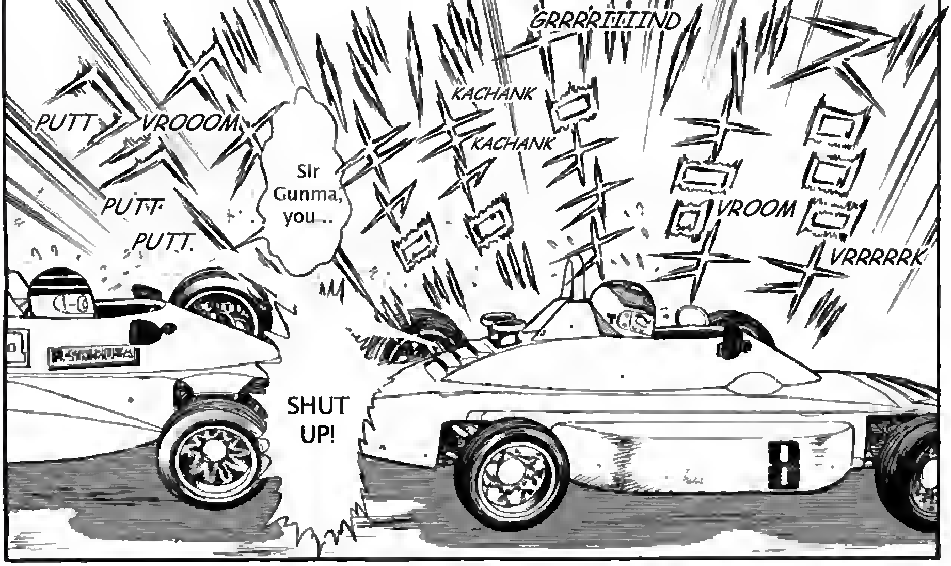

The right racing line to take for speed, optimal gear shifting, breaking points, and stuff like that will come later.
...is just to get a feel for the course and his race car!
Today's practice run...
BRAAAAH
VROOM

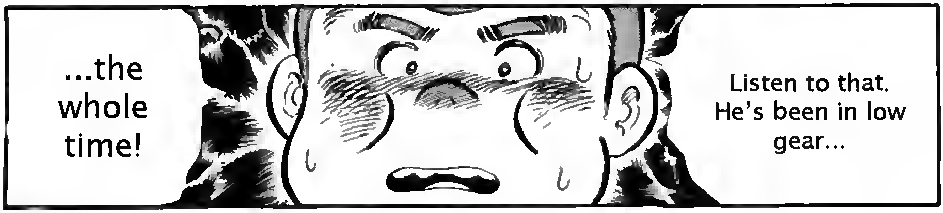

He's going pretty slow.
Makes sense.
First Gunma's gotta get a feel for the Tsukuba course and his own car, to get used to the race in general. That's when we really get started!

The other racers are already past the home straight and on their second lap.
He should've completed his first lap by now...
...
Racing takes a lot more than a big ego.
He's just a big talker, Matsuura. But you seem pretty taken by him lately.
Look! There's one car coming up on the last corner!
Mark my words on this. Gunma Akagi is all bark and no bite. He doesn't have what it takes!
At best, I see him getting through his first lap while the others are on their third!
VROOM
HA HA HA HA


ZOOOM
No... That's Hijiri.
That's not him either.
VROOM
There's another one!
Hey, did you see him crack a smile?
That's a two-time champion for you. He's on his third lap.
Arai
SUNAI
ZOOOOM
Arai
HELMETS
SUNAI

Let's move to the paddock roof!
We can see the whole course from there!
He was smiling.
Something's not right.
あっ!?
What the...!?
GRRRRITTTIND
VROOOM
VROOM
VROOM
BRUH
PUTT
Um, Sir Gunma... Go a little faster please.

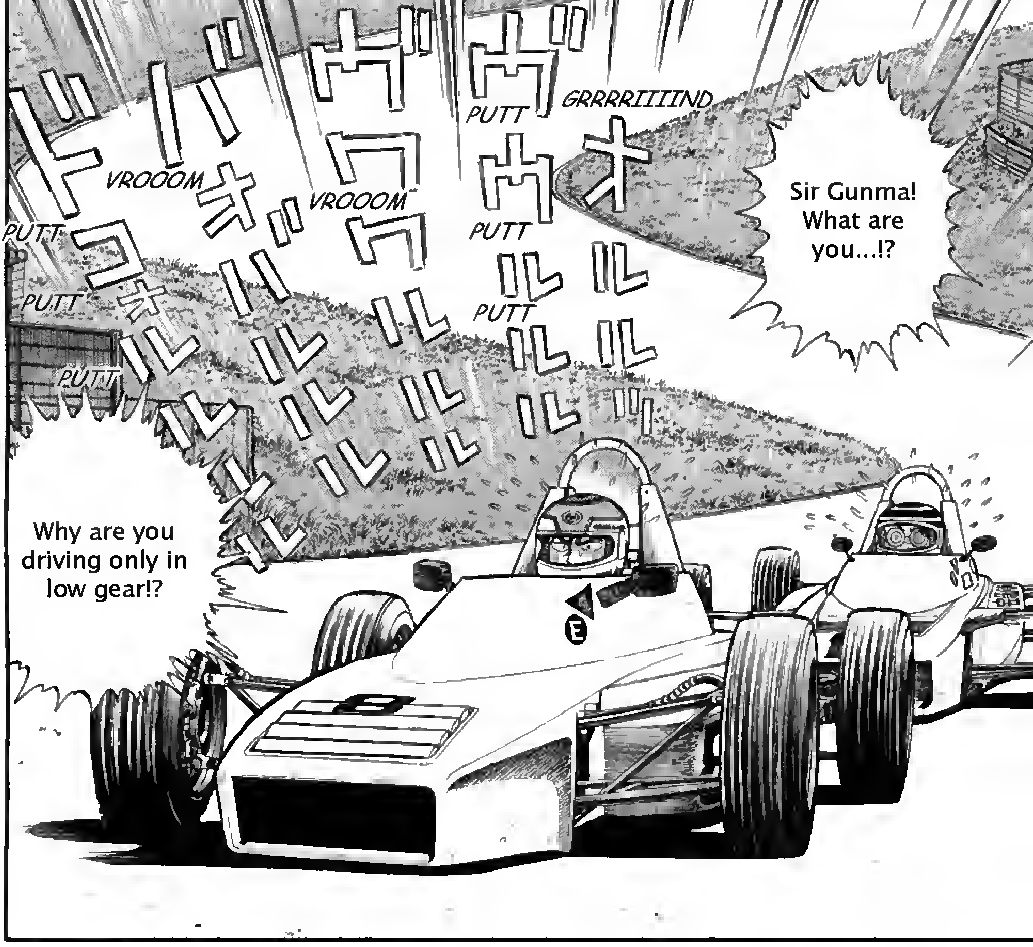

GRRRRTTTTIND
KACHANK
KACHANK
PUTT
VROOOM
PUTT
PUTT
Sir Gunma, you...
VROOM
VRRRRRK
SHUT UP!


...the whole time!
Listen to that. He's been in low gear...

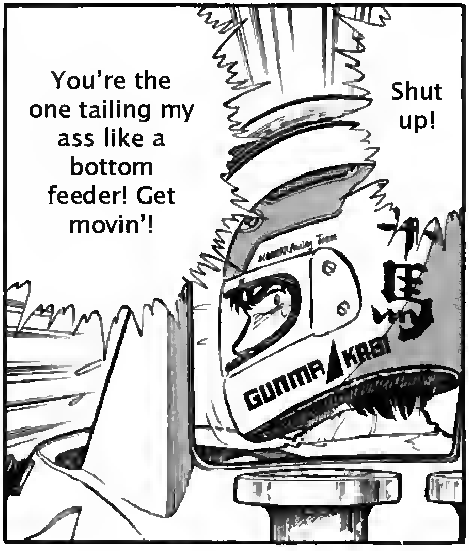
...it smashed my left foot and I can't disengage the clutch!
Dammit... When that bike fell on top of me...

Yay
Heh heh heh
...

Chapter 7: Obstacles


VROOOM
VROOOM
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
GRRRRIIIIND
Sir Gunma! What are you...!?
Why are you driving only in low gear!?

Practice run or not, I refuse to disrespect a veteran driver by going ahead of him.
You're a veteran, Sir Gunma! I can't pass you!
I... I can't do it!
HIDEO


You're the one tailing my ass like a bottom feeder! Get movin'!
Shut up!
GUNMA KART

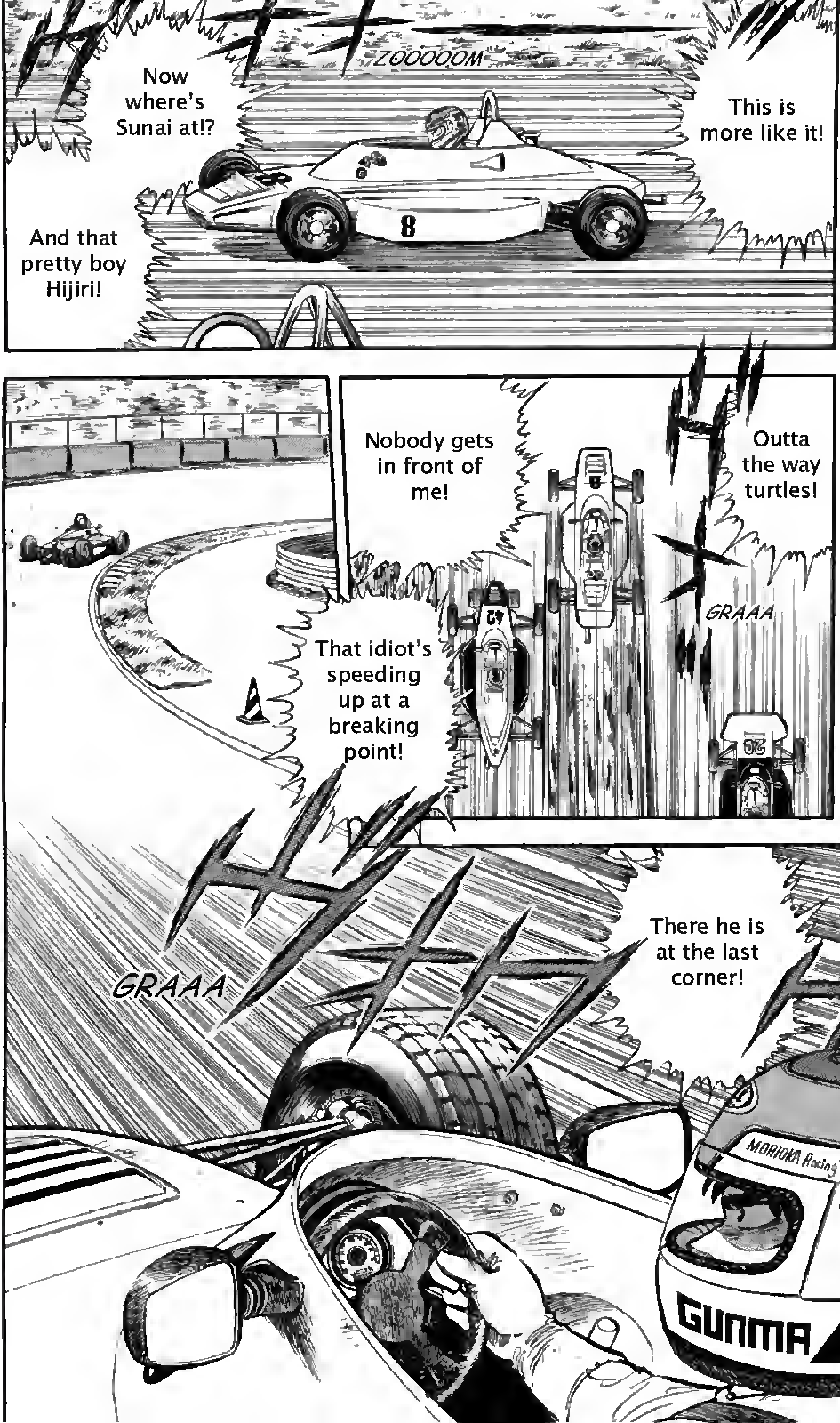
※Shift up = Change into a higher gear. The opposite is called shifting down.
※Transmission = Part of the machine that changes gears to adjust to different speeds.

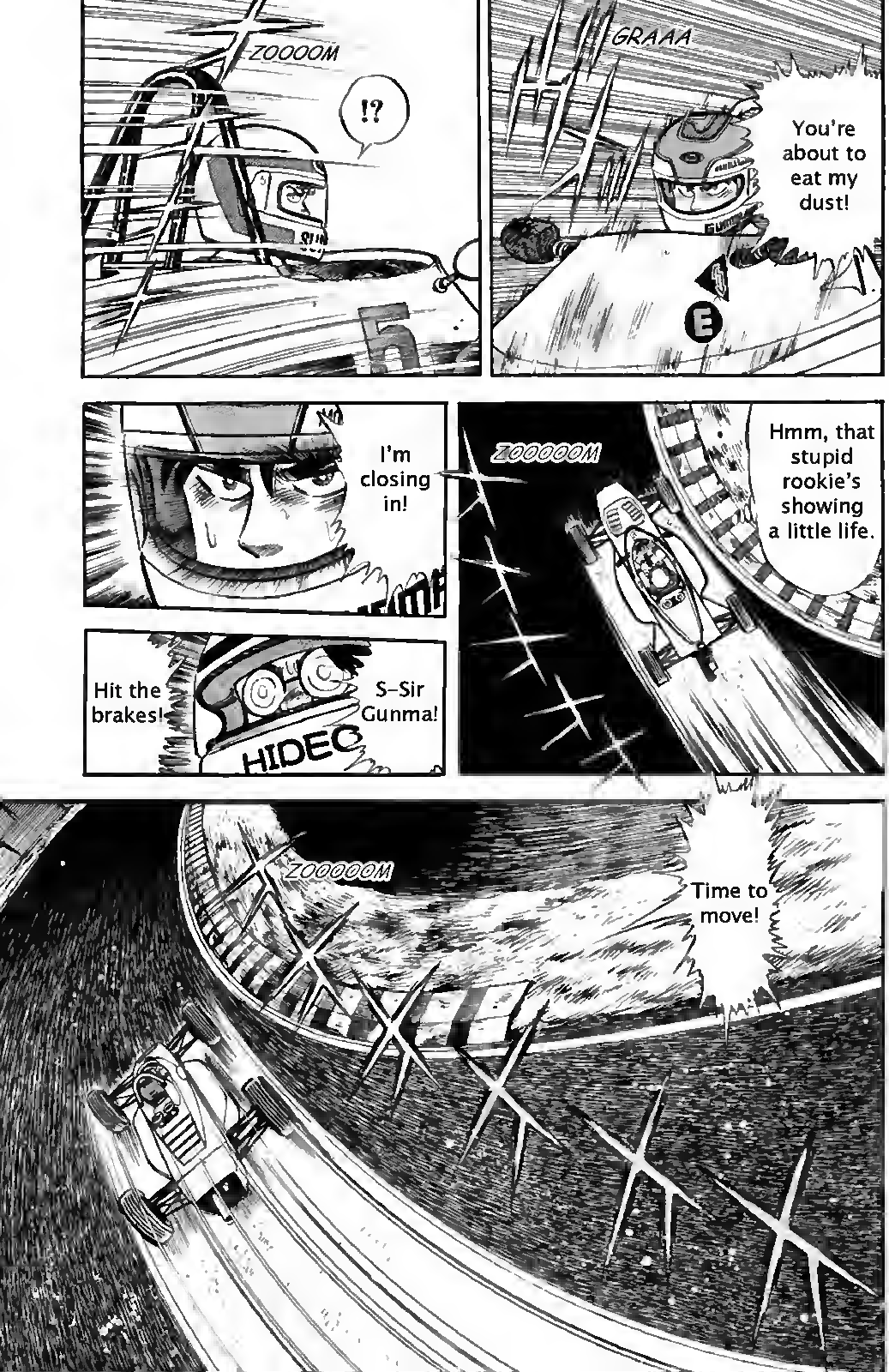
* Over rev = When the engine rotates too quickly.

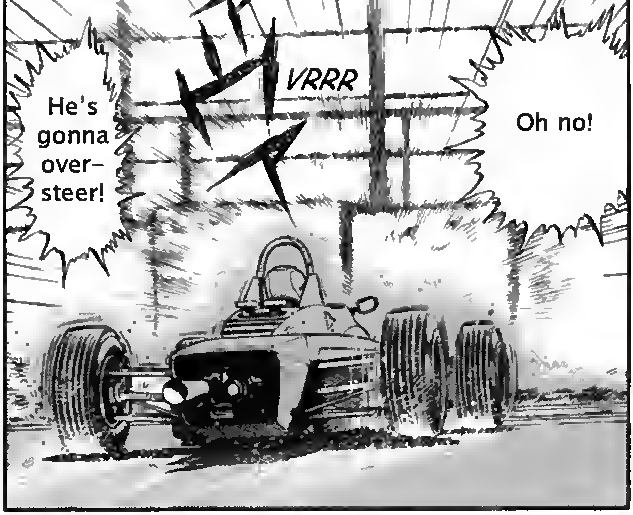
Did that motorcycle hurt your left foot by any chance!?
Sir Gunma!
SHOOM
HIDEO
GUNMA
That has to be it!
HIDEO
HA HA HA
I knew it! That's why you're driving in low and can't change gears!
What do you care!?
May- be...
But wouldn't it be better to stop in the pit and treat your foot!?
I'm sorry to bother you like this...
ZOOOOOM
?
SHOOM
Whoahhh!
HIDEO

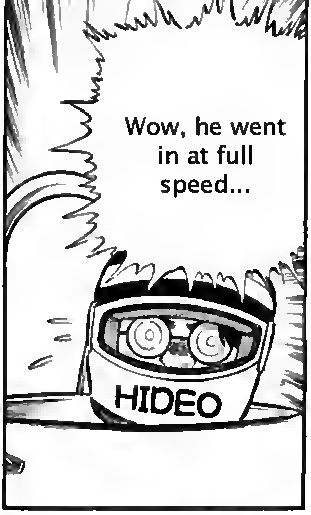
VRRRRRR
I don't even need my left foot at this point.
Crap ...
FOCUSED
Sir Gun-maaa!
VRRRRRRR
VRRRRR
PUSH
FOCUS
Here goes nothin'!
What!?
I'll just use my right foot for the whole damn thing!

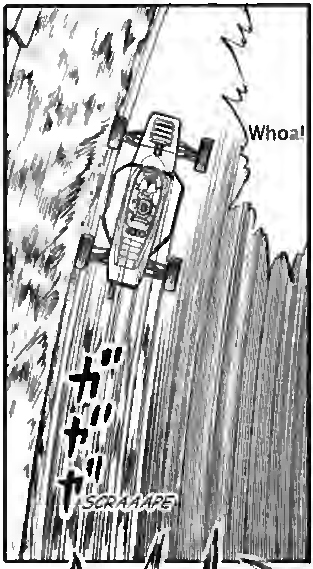
PUSH
KUSHIK
Get into third gear...
Then hit the gas quick!
PUSH
I'll disengage with my right foot...
VROO
OOH
Wow! A one-foot technique!
HIDEO
Check me out!
Now fourth gear!
GROOO
15
KUSHIK
8
And he's way ahead of me now...
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT

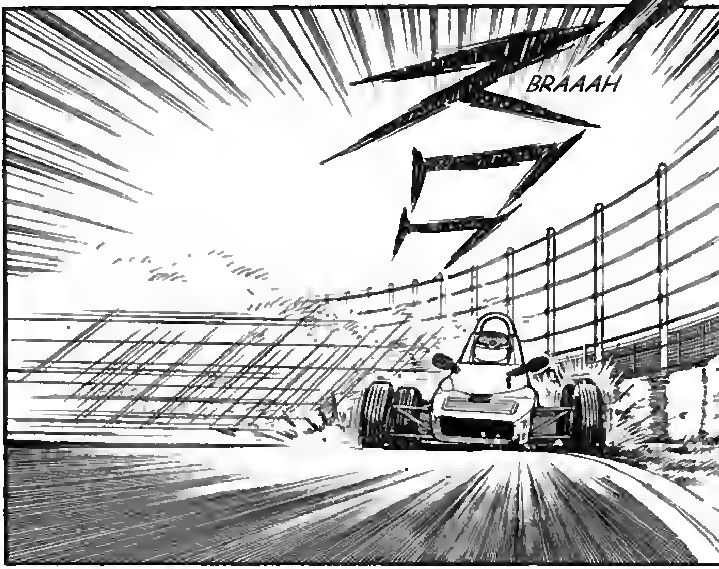

ZOOOOOM
Now where's Sunai at!?
This is more like it!
And that pretty boy Hijiri!
Nobody gets in front of me!
Outta the way turtles!
GRAAA
That idiot's speeding up at a breaking point!
GRAAA
There he is at the last corner!
MORIOKA Racing Team
GUNMA


ZOOOOM
!?
GRAAA
You're about to eat my dust!
I'm closing in!
ZOOOOOM
Hmm, that stupid rookie's showing a little life.
Hit the brakes!
S-Sir Gunma!
HIDEC
ZOOOOOM
Time to move!


He's gonna over-steer!
VRRR
Oh no!

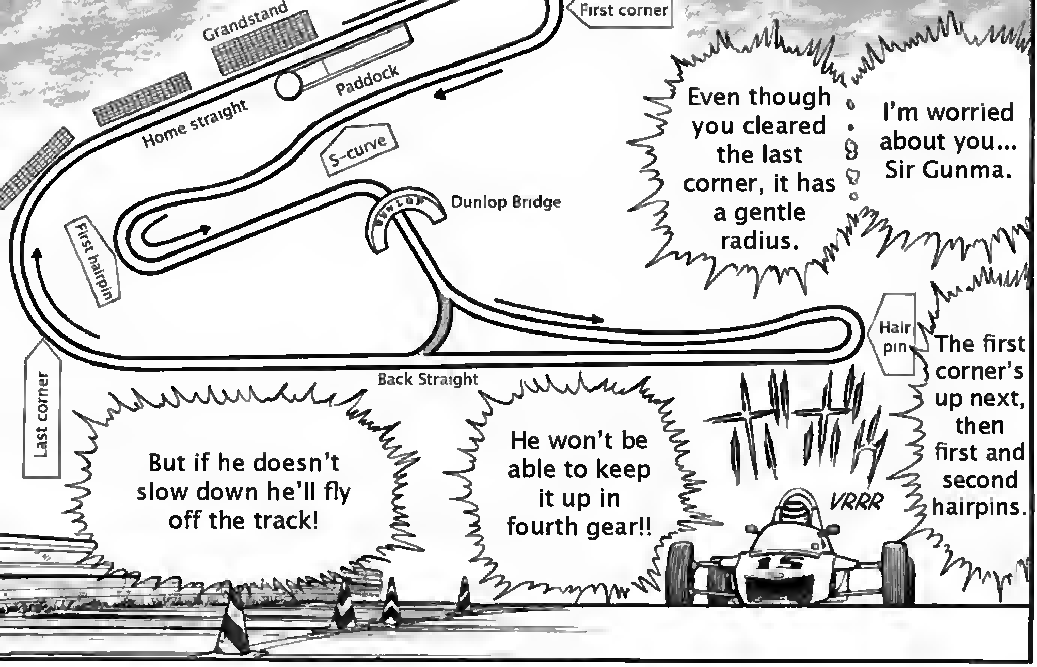

Wow, he went in at full speed...
HIDEO

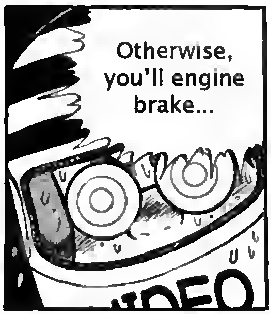

Whoa!
ガガガ
SCRAAAPE

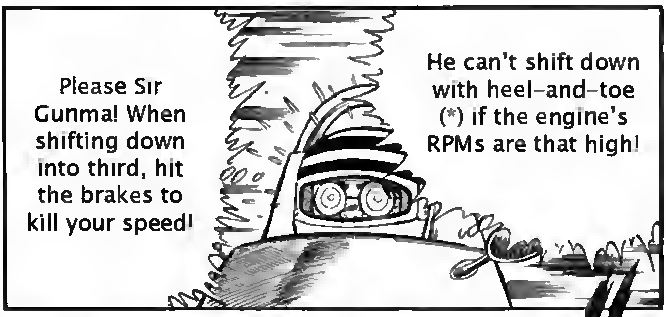

BRAAAH

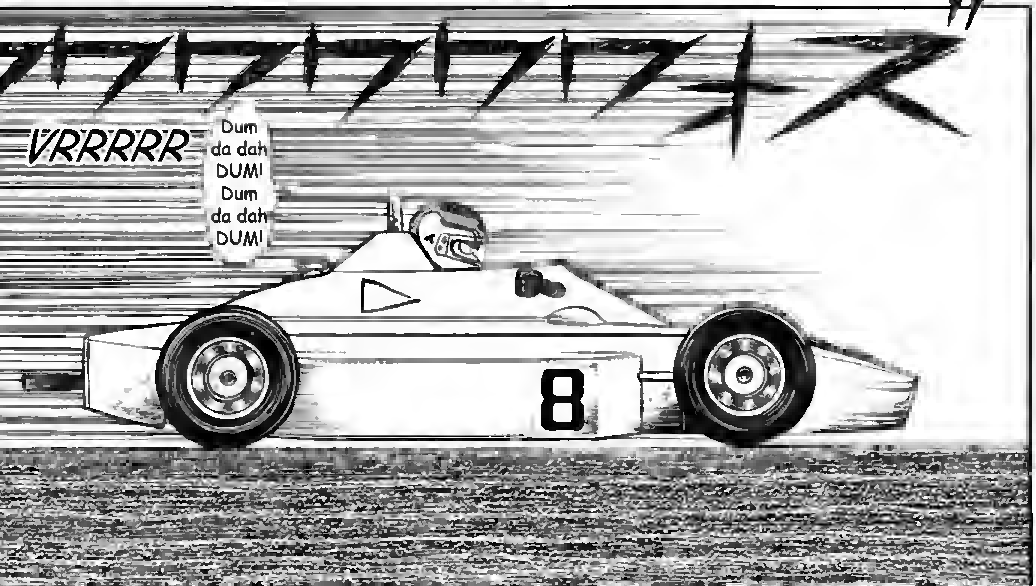
VROOM
No way.
What is he doing?

Why's he speeding up!?
There he is!
GUNMA: PIT

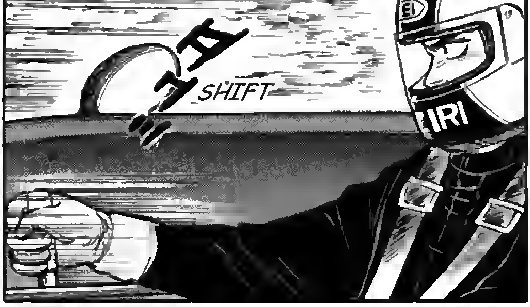




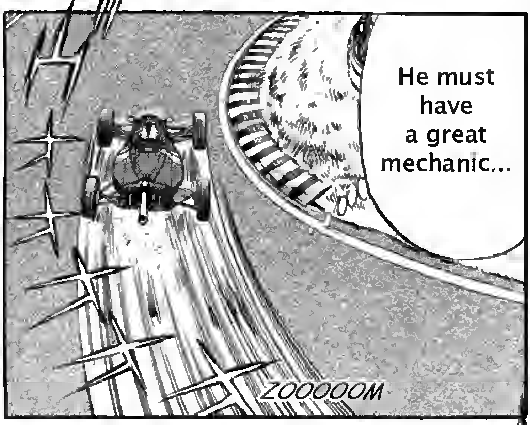


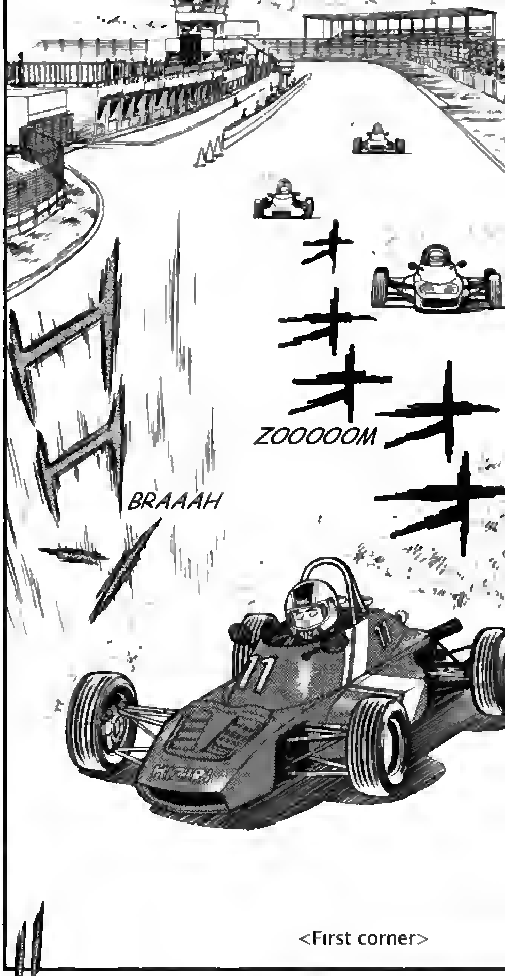


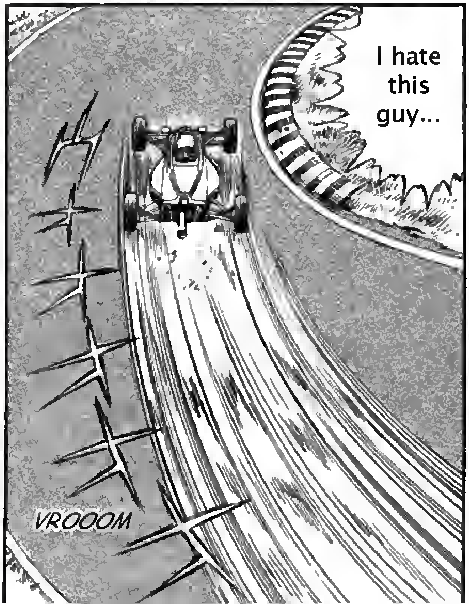
* Heel-and-toe = A technique to control the accelerator and brake simultaneously.


SHIFT
IRI

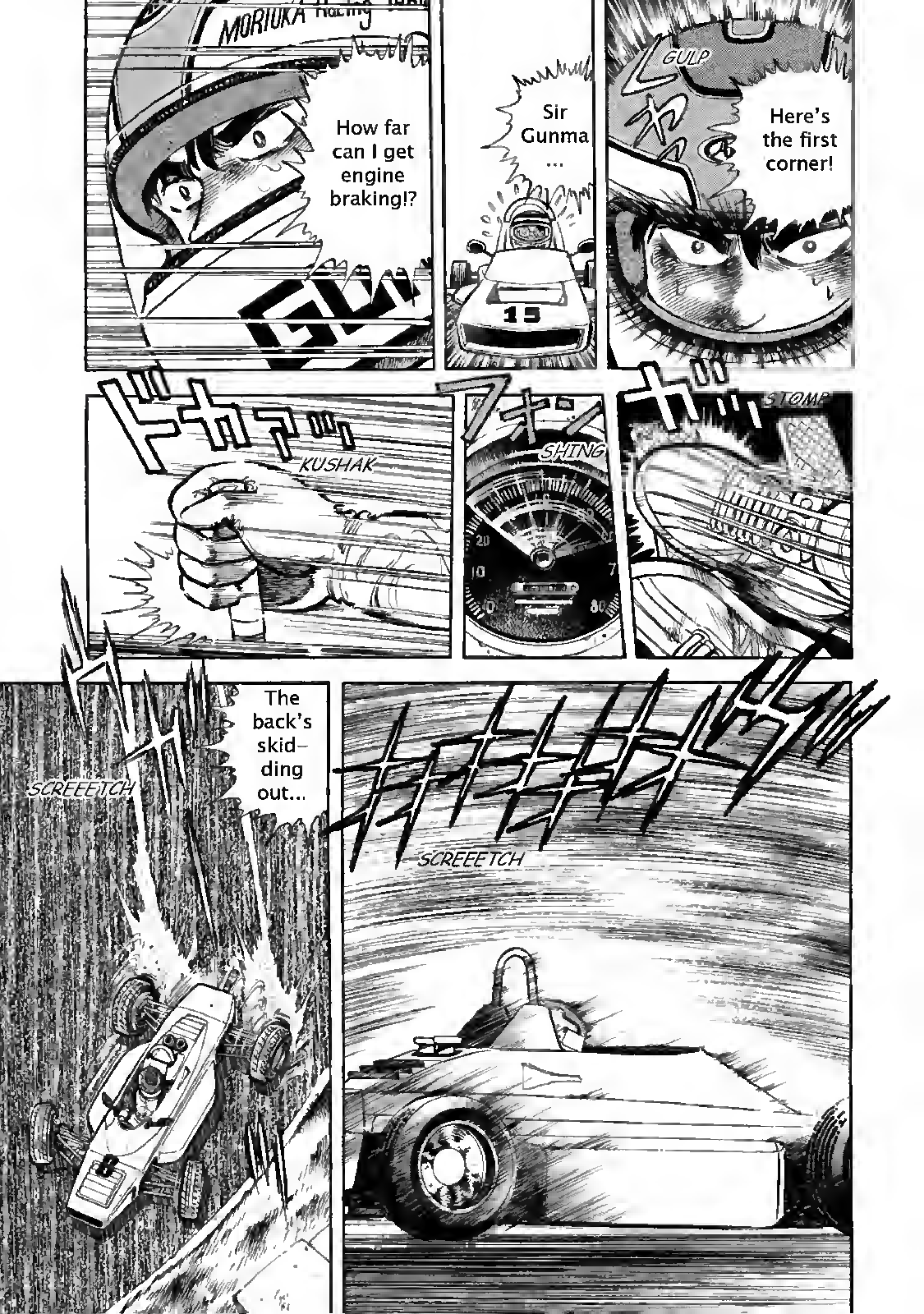
That Akagi kid is pretty unorthodox, but he can really speed up on the straightaway.

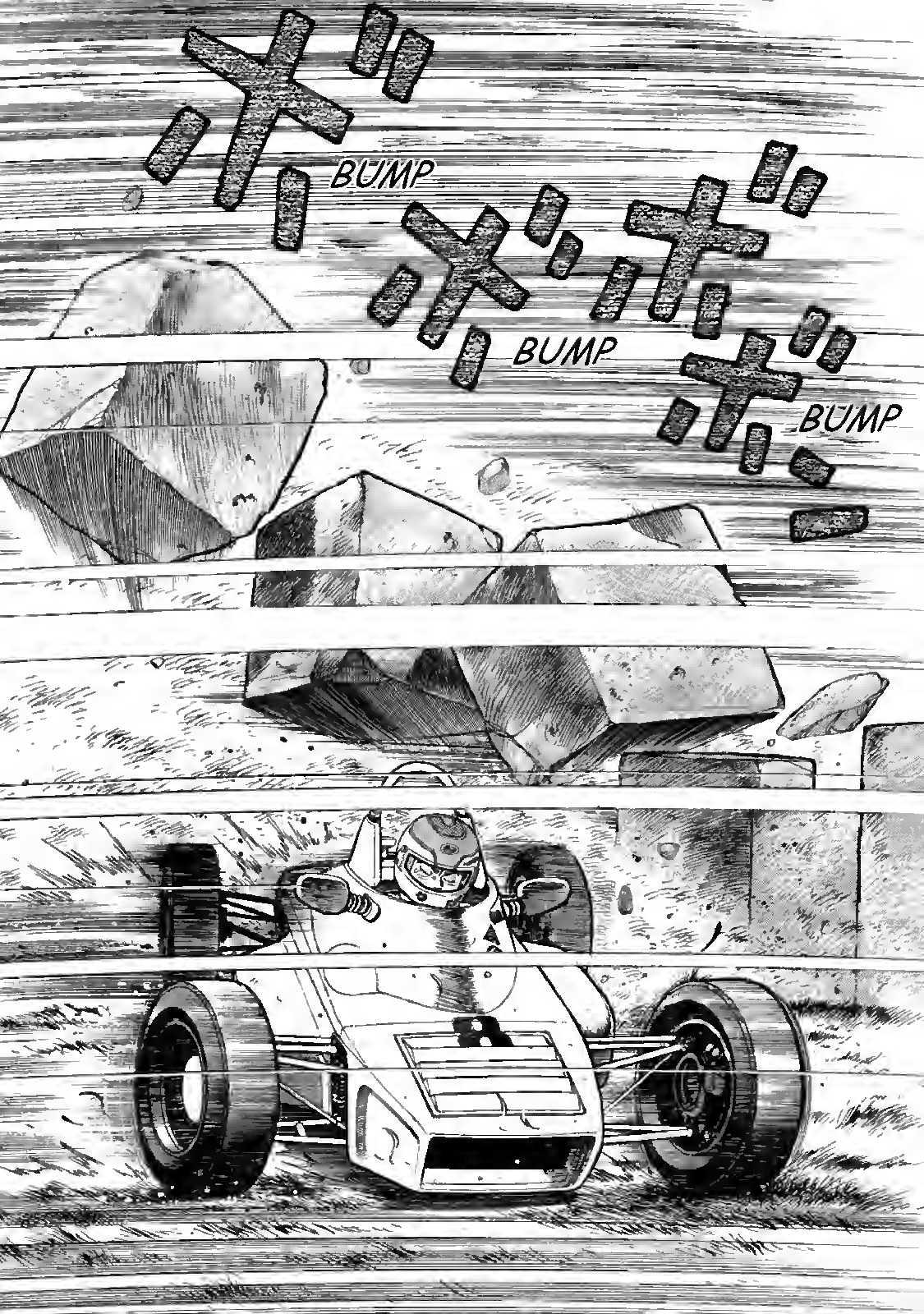

He must have a great mechanic...
ZOOOOOM


ZOOOOOM
BRAAAH
11
<First corner>


I hate this guy...
VROOOM

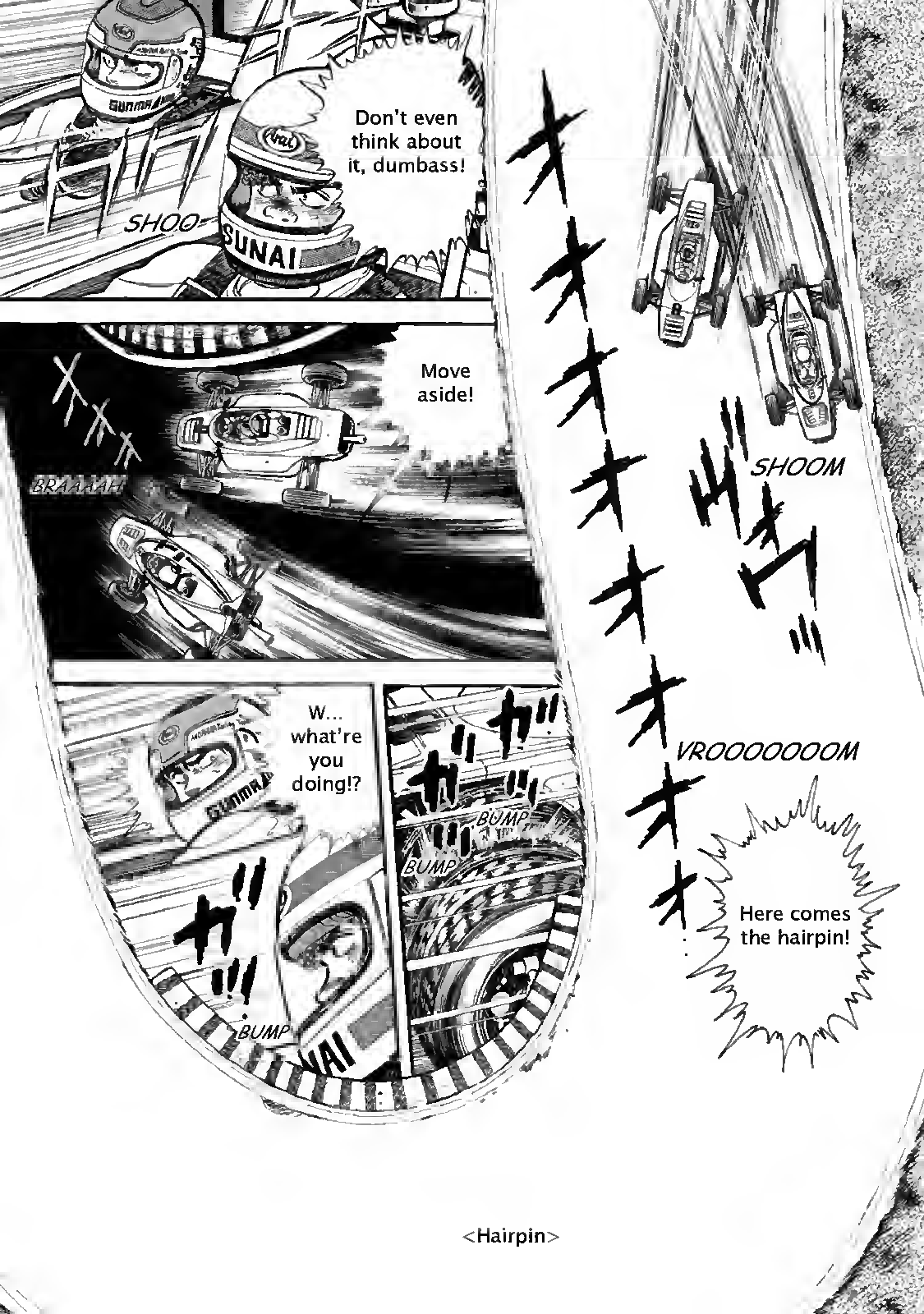
Here he comes. Don't forget you're three laps behind, dumbass!
ZOOM
SUNAI
5
5


MORIOKA Racing
How far can I get engine braking!?
Sir Gunma ...
15
GULP
Here's the first corner!
KUSHAK
SHING
20
10
0
7
80
STOMP
The back's skid-ding out...
SCREEETCH
SCREEETCH


BUMP
BUMP
BUMP

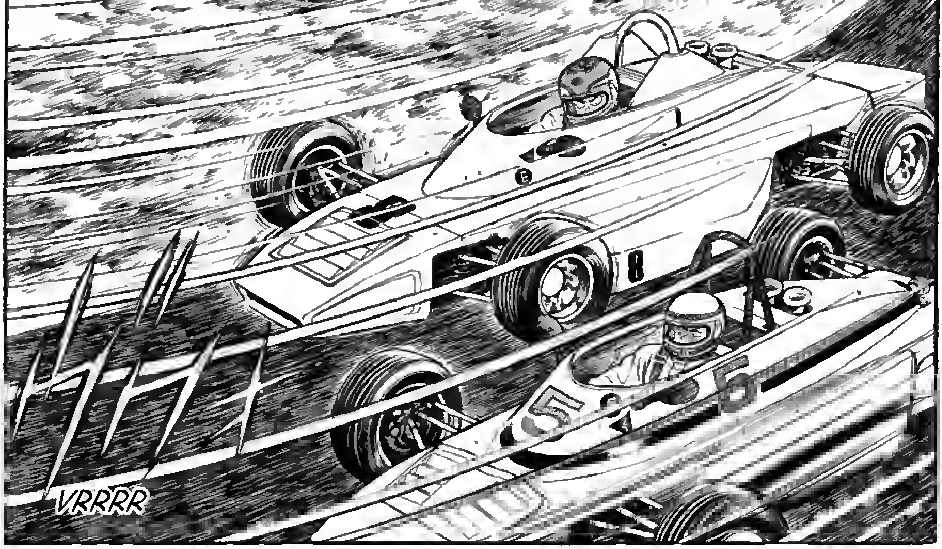
Whoa!
OH NO!
BUMP
BUMP
BUMP
WHOAAAAA!
Yes! Back on track baby!
SCREE
SCREE
SCREE
Time to step on it!
KAVROOOOH

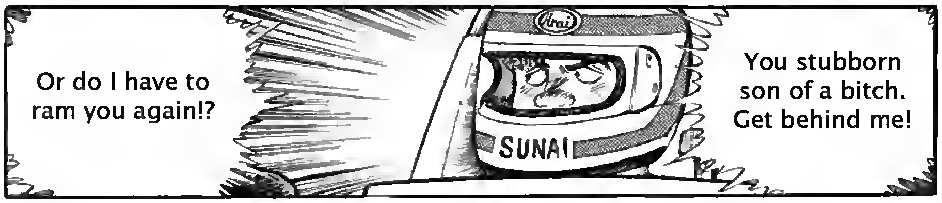
OH NOOO!
BAM
15SHINSHIN
What a wild one...
You're ama-zing!
S-Sir Gunma!
HIDEO
SHOOM
Hyaa-aaah!
VRR
Sheez, what messed up cornering!
MAI
5
SHOE!
He's closing in on Sunai...
ZOOOOOM
SUNAI
BRAAAAH
BRAAAAH
BRAAAAH

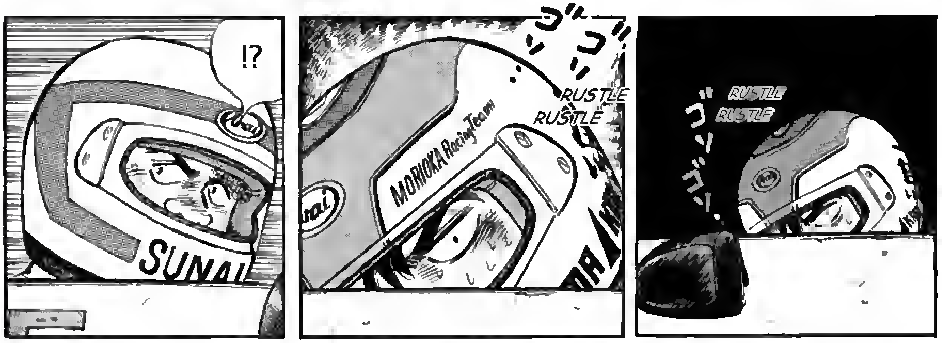

Don't even think about it, dumbass!
SHOO-
SUNAI
Move aside!
BRAAAAH!
W... what're you doing!?
BUMP
VAI
BUMP
BUMP
SHOOM
VROOOOOOOM
Here comes the hairpin!

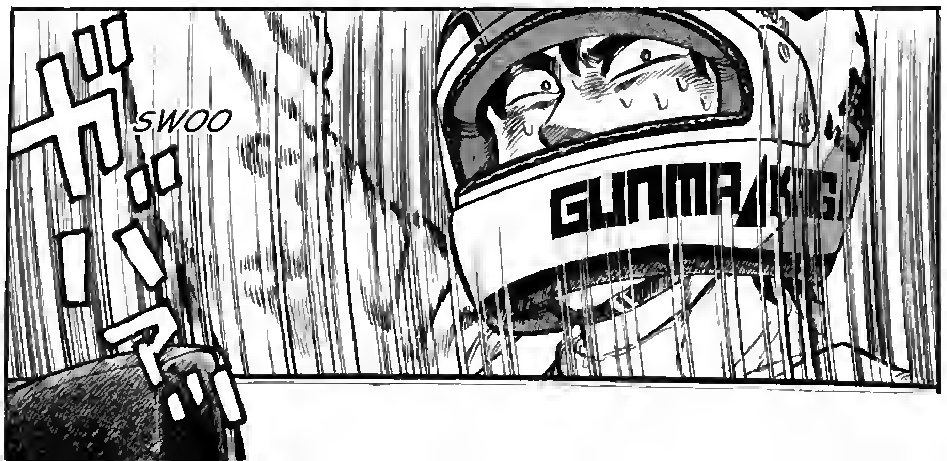
<Hairpin>

You sonuva ...
Arai
GUNMA
HEY!
ZOOOM
BUMP
BUMP
5
Now I'm pissed!
Arrghh!
What do you mean?
Gunma wouldn't do "that," would he...?
!?
I've got a bad feeling about this.
Shoot ...
But when I say fired up...!
He really gets fired up when there's trouble like this.
Gunma's at his best when things are bad.

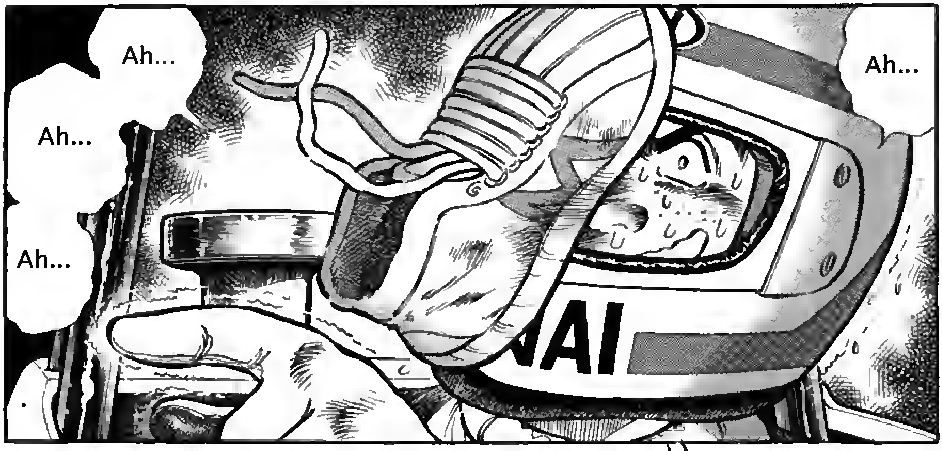

VRRRR

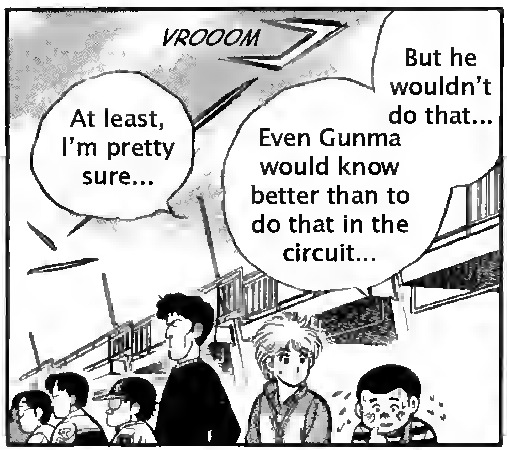

Or do I have to ram you again!?
SUNAI
You stubborn son of a bitch. Get behind me!

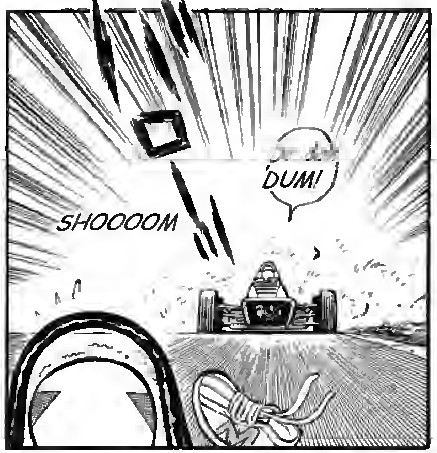

!?
SUNAI
MORIOKA Racing Team
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE


SWOO
GUNMA

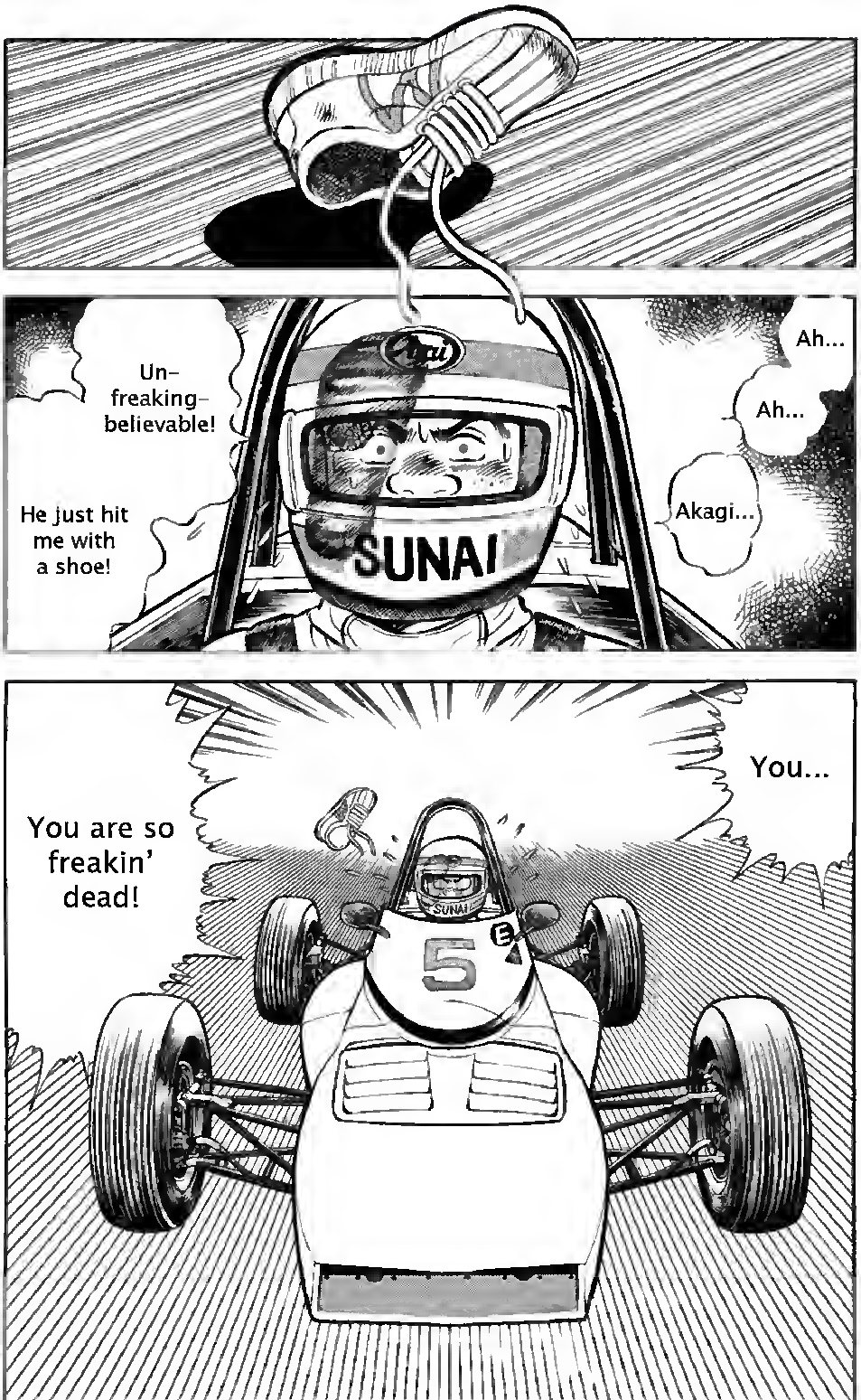
FOR YOU!
SMACK


Ah...
Ah...
Ah...
Ah...


VROOOM
At least, I'm pretty sure...
Even Gunma would know better than to do that in the circuit...
But he wouldn't do that...


SHOOOOM
DUM!

Chapter 8:
Mad Brawl


Un-freaking-believable!
He just hit me with a shoe!
SUNAI
Ah...
Ah...
Akagi...
You...
You are so freakin' dead!
5

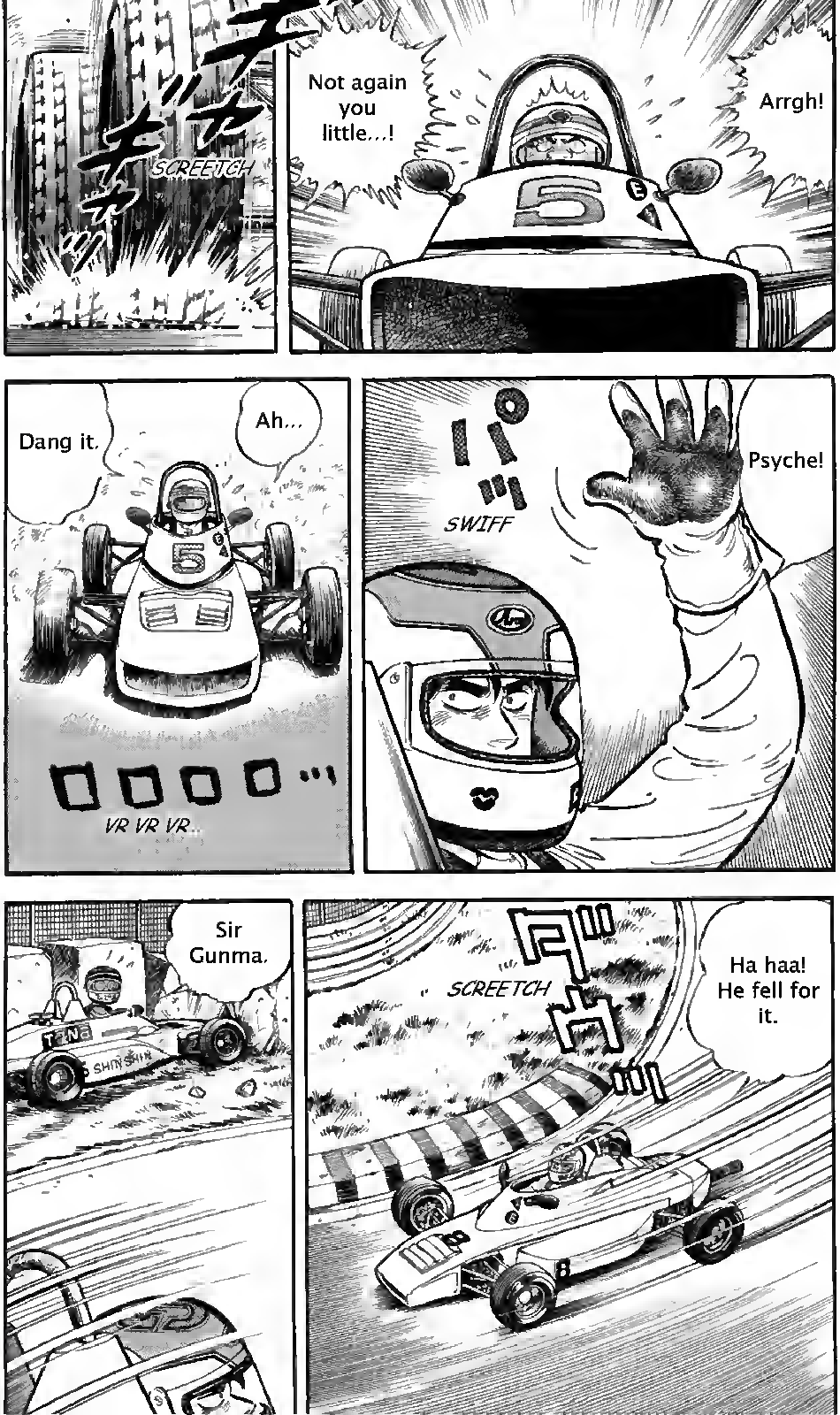
Hold it, dumbass!
VROOM
Nobody gets in front of me!
But he's gotta learn!
BRAAM
Heh, Sunai's back.
And he looks mighty pissed.
GUNMA

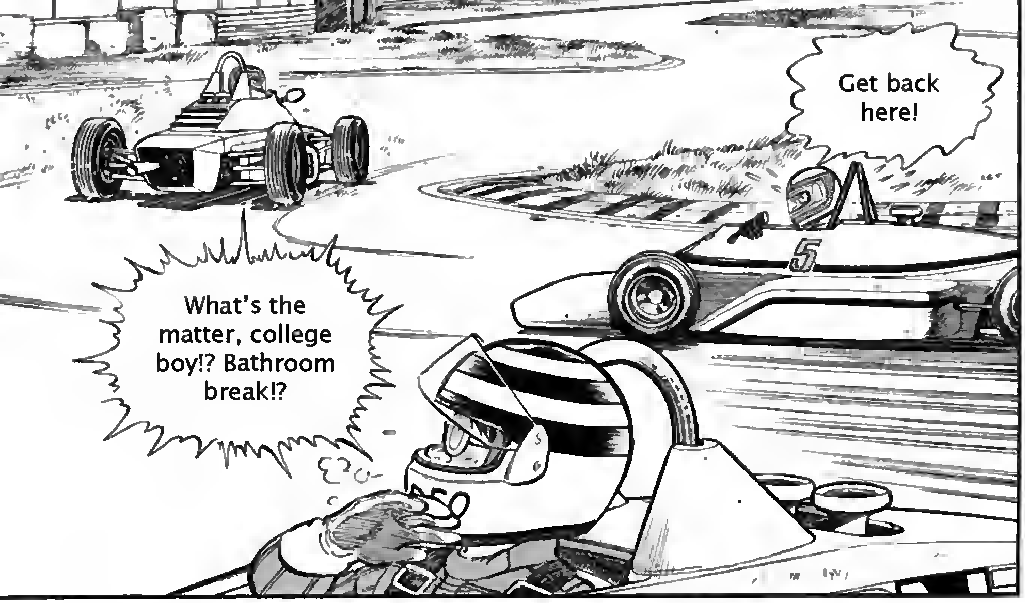
Heh heh!
Damn you!
MORIOKA
GUNMA
SUNAI
SCREEETCH
Where's Hijiri now!?
GUNMA KAGI

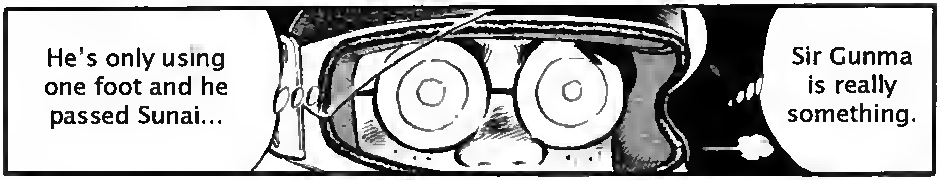
<Last corner>
Where the hell's Hijiri!?
BRAAAAAAAH
BREEEH
Get back here!
I'll get you, Akagi!
Dammit! He's already at the first corner!
Damn!
Hijiri!
<Home straight>

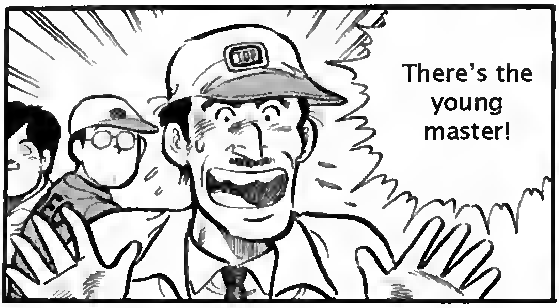
VROOM
Even though he's three laps behind because of that car trouble...
...he managed to pass No. 5 on this lap.
Look! Gunma pulled ahead of No. 5 on this lap!
I don't know. His lap time is way below average.
Which means No. 5 must be going really slow.
I hope the reason No. 5 slowed down...
...is nothing more than a simple spin out.
Exactly.
He must've spun out or something.
Please Gunma. Be a gentle-man like we talked about.
THUMP
THUMP
ドキドキ
He looked pretty bad on that first corner.
Anyway, we better hold up that pit sign again.

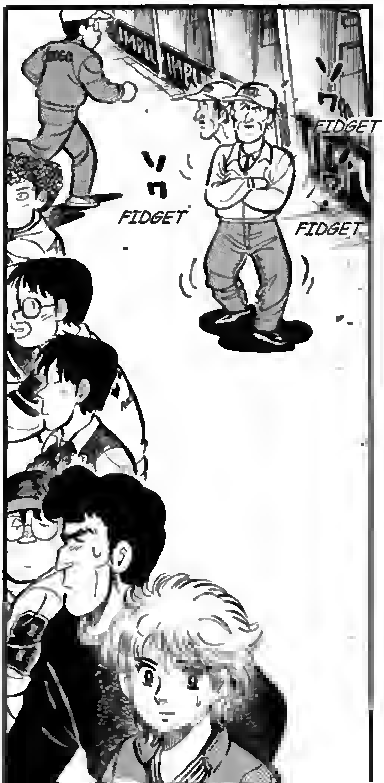
But I've only got my right foot!
If I don't slow down I'll go into a spin!
THROB
THROB
You're dead!
But I don't wanna slow down with Sunai on my tail!
Guess I don't got a choice!
I got another shoe!
Sunai!
POP
ROOOOOAR
Damn. It's that tight R corner again, the first corner!
No way I'm lettin' that engine brake happen again.
VROOOM

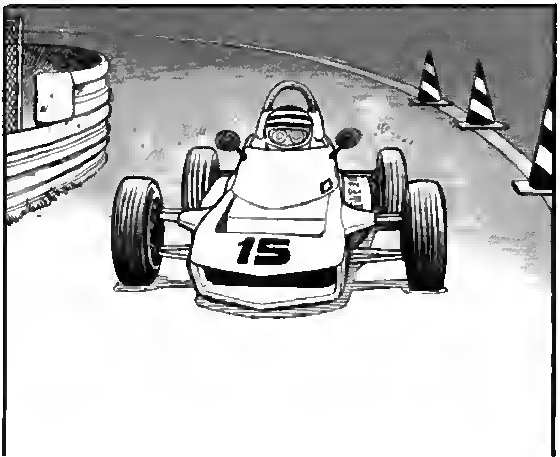

SCREETCH
Not again you little...!
Arrgh!
Dang it.
Ah...
VR VR VR...
SWIFF
Psyche!
Sir Gunma.
SCREETCH
Ha haa! He fell for it.


Get back here!
What's the matter, college boy!? Bathroom break!?


He's only using one foot and he passed Sunai...
Sir Gunma is really something.


There's the young master!


FIDGET
FIDGET
FIDGET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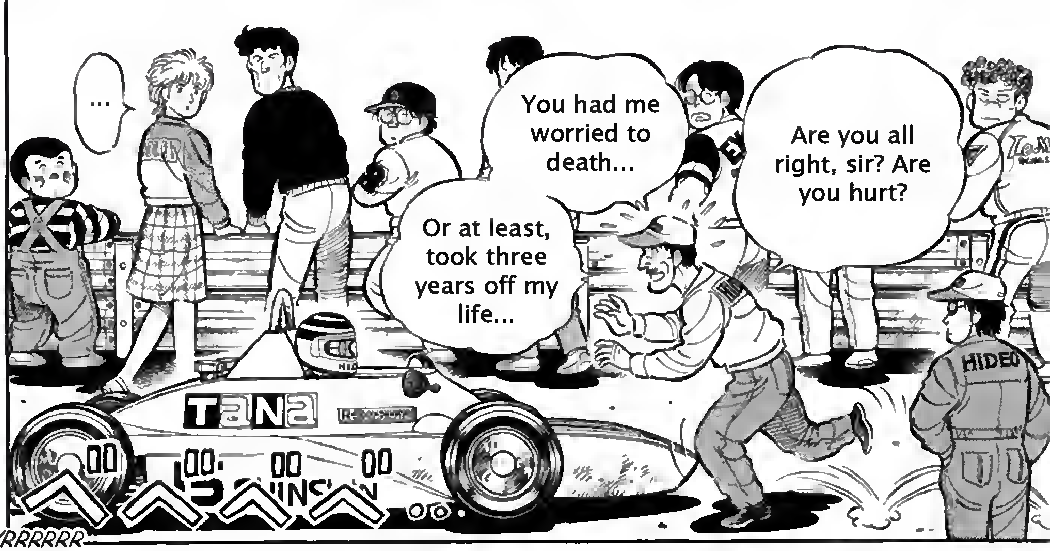
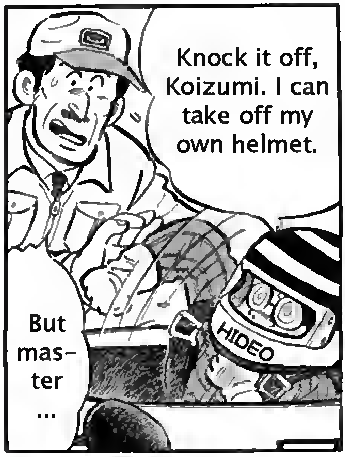
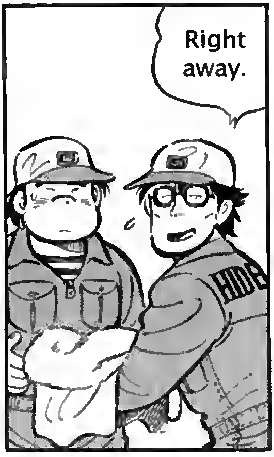
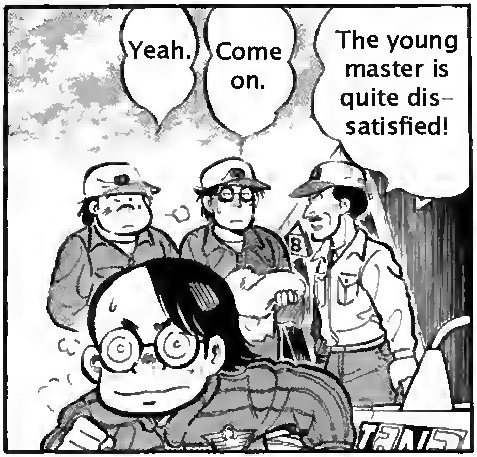
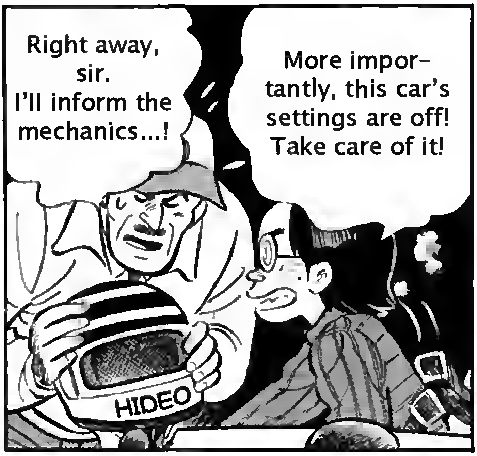

...
You had me worried to death...
Or at least, took three years off my life...
Are you all right, sir? Are you hurt?
TaNa
HIDEO
VRRRRRR


Knock it off, Koizumi. I can take off my own helmet.
But mas-ter ...
HIDEO

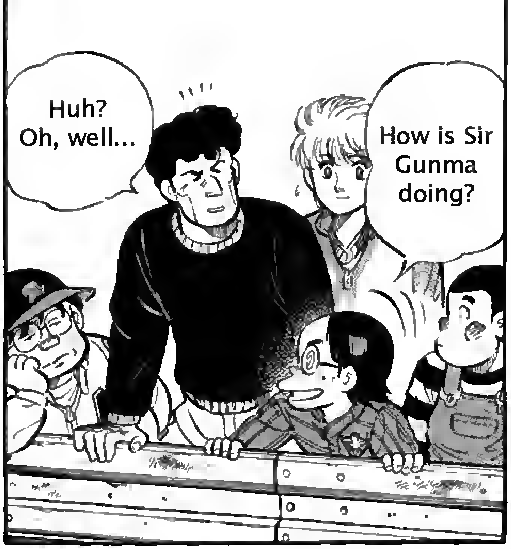

Right away.
HIDE

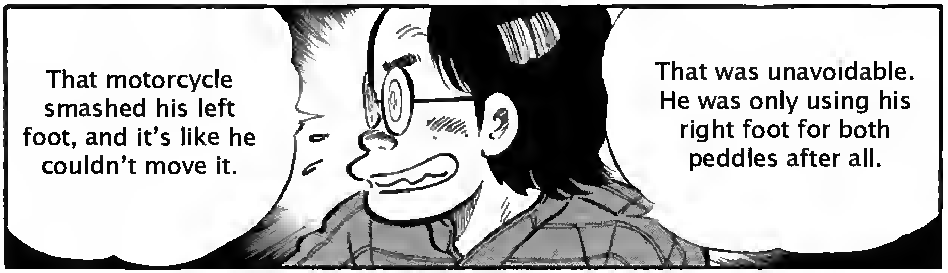
What are you doing? Take the young master's helmet and get him a nice hot towel to freshen up! At once!
HIDEO
HIDEO

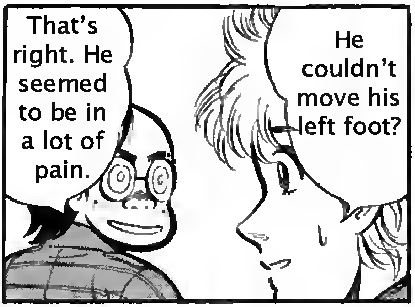

Yeah.
Come on.
The young master is quite dis-satisfied!


Right away, sir. I'll inform the mechanics...!
More impor-tantly, this car's settings are off! Take care of it!
HIDEO

VROOM
And his cornering is pitiful.
Heh. His time was beyond terrible on that first lap.

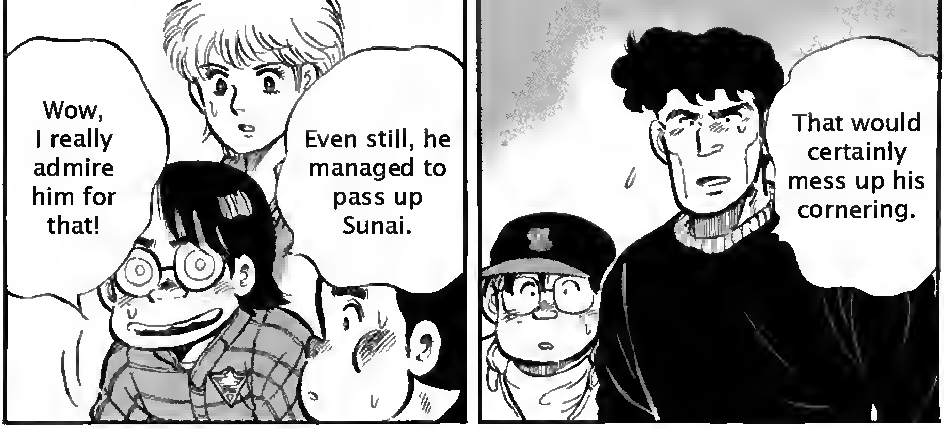

Huh? Oh, well...
How is Sir Gunma doing?


That motorcycle smashed his left foot, and it's like he couldn't move it.
That was unavoidable. He was only using his right foot for both peddles after all.

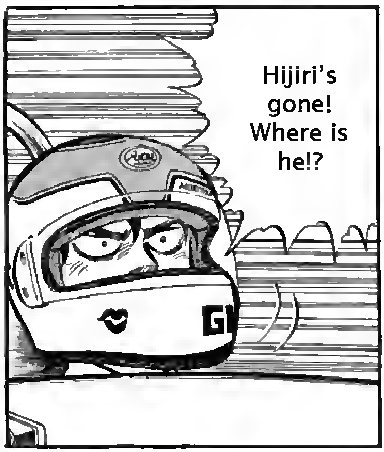

That's right. He seemed to be in a lot of pain.
He couldn't move his left foot?

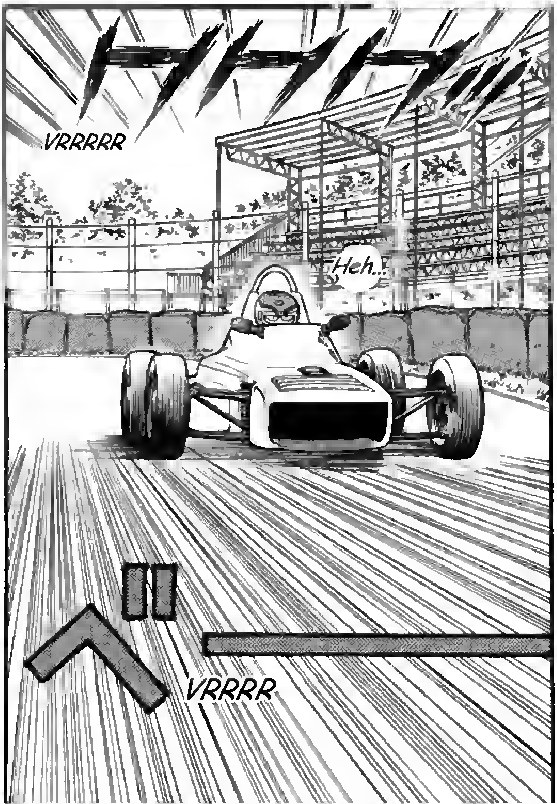
...

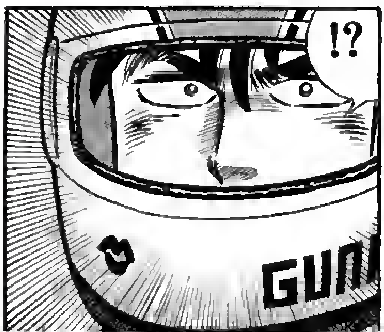
Uh-huh. He used his right foot to disengage the clutch, and was driving with one foot the rest of the way.
So then...
So that's why he was in low gear on the first lap.


Wow, I really admire him for that!
Even still, he managed to pass up Sunai.
That would certainly mess up his cornering.

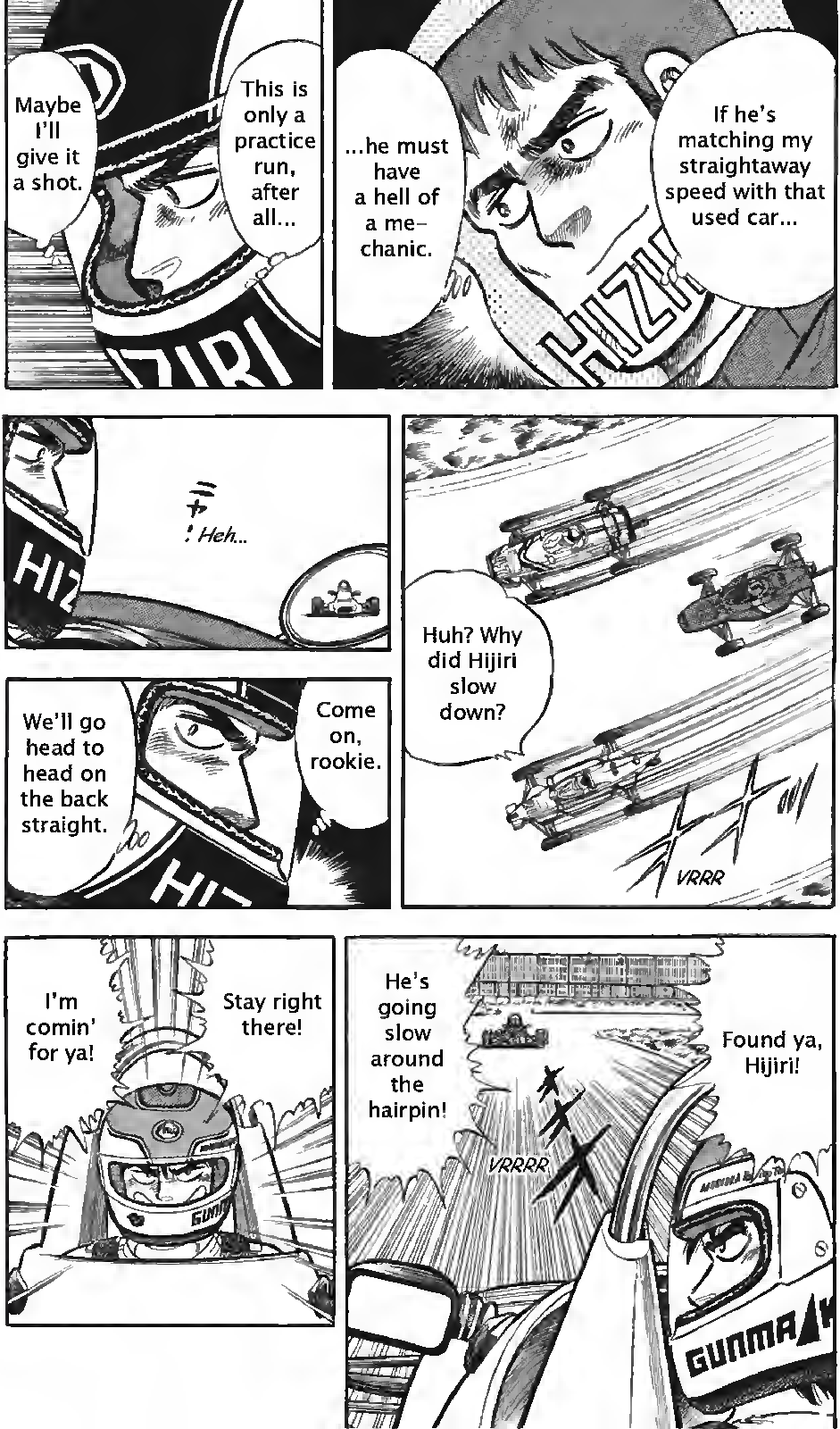
There he is!
Please be a gentle-man, Gunma.
Oh no... Can't get that bad feeling out of my mind.

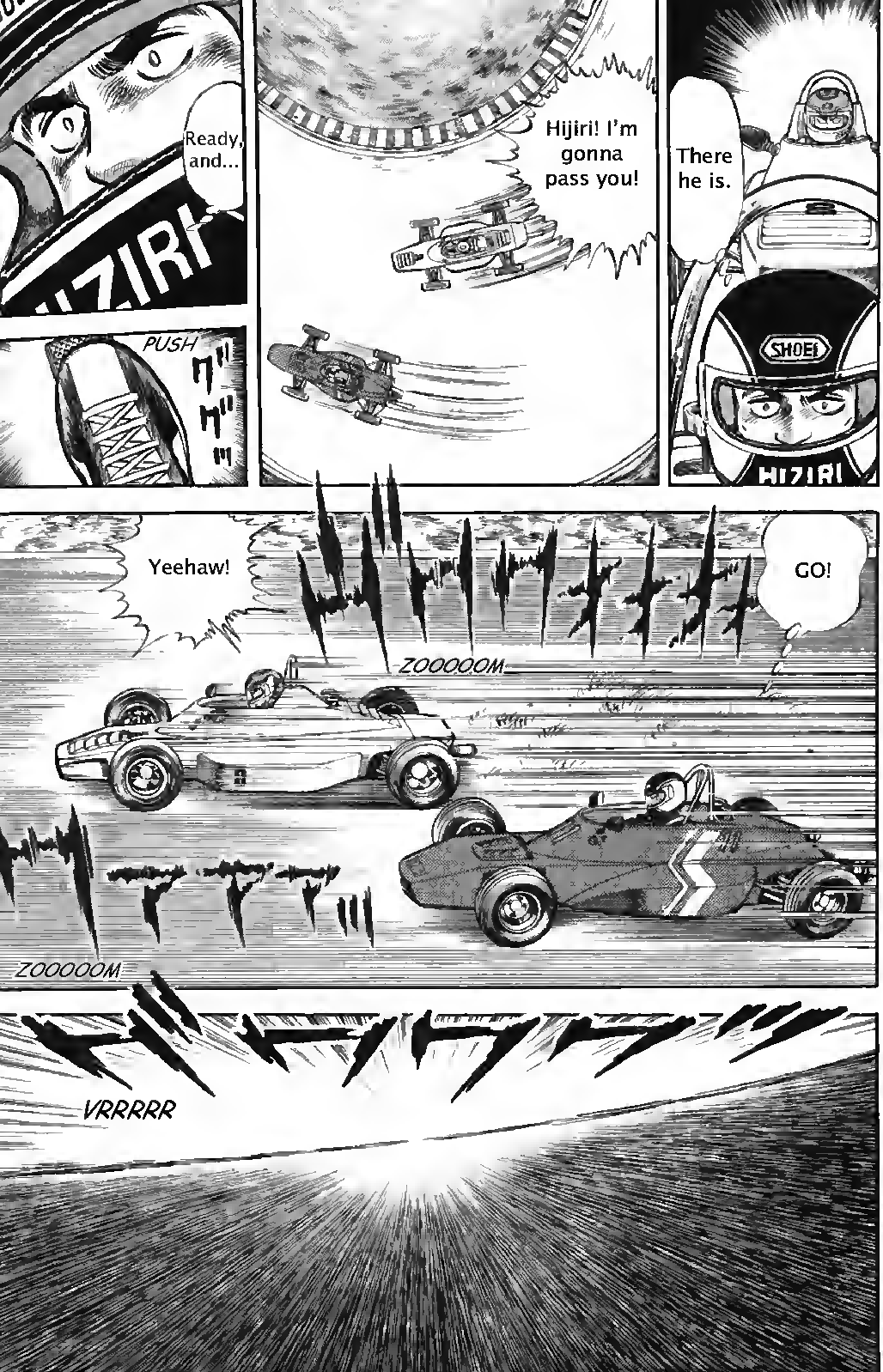

Hijiri's gone! Where is he!?


VRRRRR
Heh..!
VRRRR

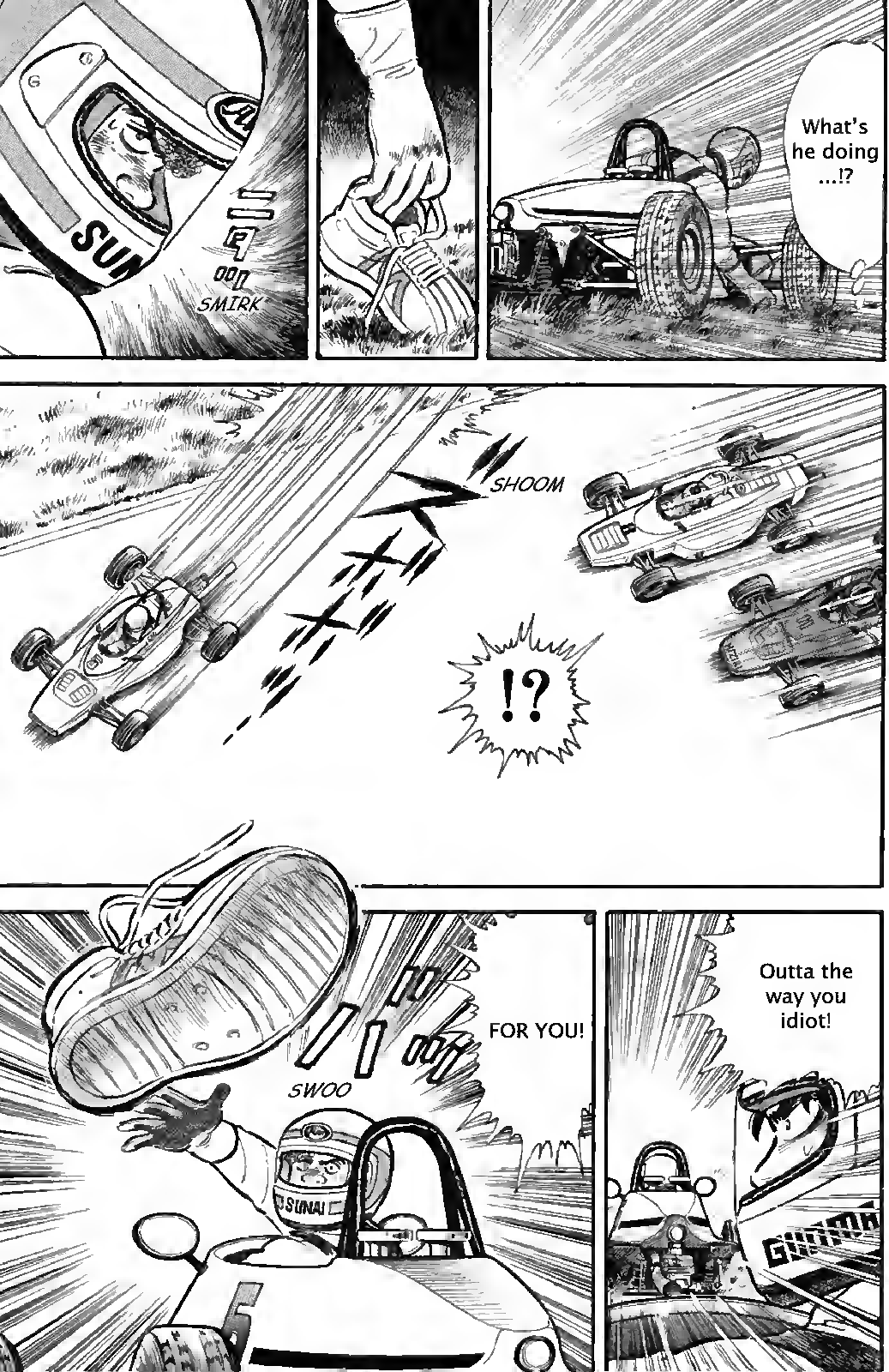

!?
GUN

Hehehhh!
GUNMA
Be a
Gentleman!
Sir Gunma!
...
ZOOOOM
...about that
Akagi kid's...
...race
car.
Something's
odd...
11
1
HIZIRI


Maybe I'll give it a shot.
This is only a practice run, after all...
...he must have a hell of a mechanic.
If he's matching my straightaway speed with that used car...
Heh...
We'll go head to head on the back straight.
Come on, rookie.
Huh? Why did Hijiri slow down?
VRRR
I'm comin' for ya!
Stay right there!
He's going slow around the hairpin!
VRRRR
Found ya, Hijiri!
GUNMA

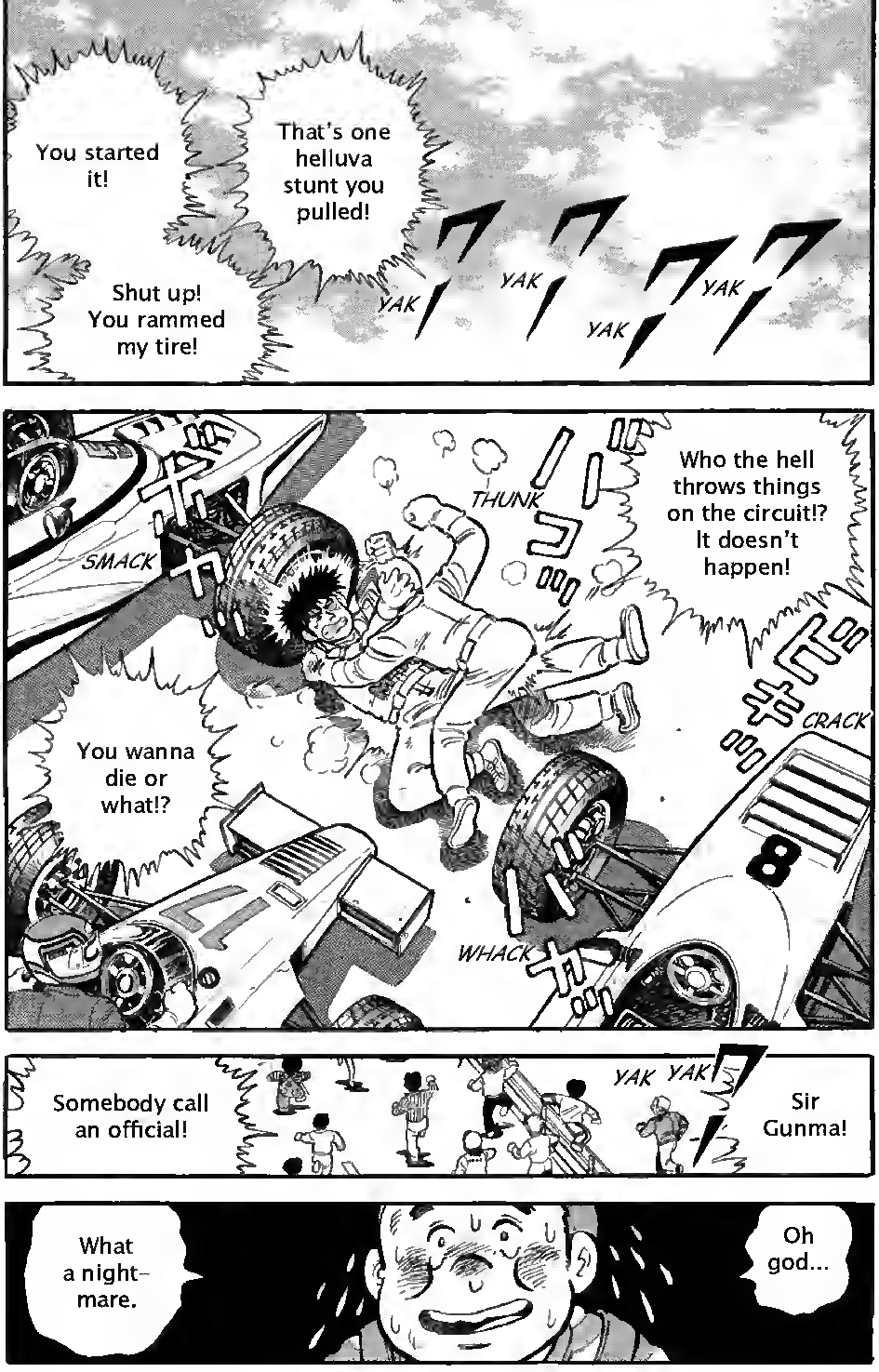

Ready, and...
HIJIRI
PUSH
Hijiri! I'm gonna pass you!
There he is.
SHOEI
HIJIRI
Yeehaw!
ZOOOOOM
GO!
ZOOOOOM
VRRRRR

Almost there!
...
BRAAAAH
!?
SHOEI
HIZIRI
Sunai?
Come on!
Come on!
ZIRI


SUN
SMIRK
What's he doing ...!?
SHOOM
!?
SWOO
FOR YOU!
Outta the way you idiot!

Direct hit!
Heh heh heh!
SUNAI
THUNK
Huh?
11
HIZIRI
Hm? H-Hey ...
What're you...?
Don't do it!
IRI
CLICK
GUNMA
!
SUNAI
Ready, and...
IRI

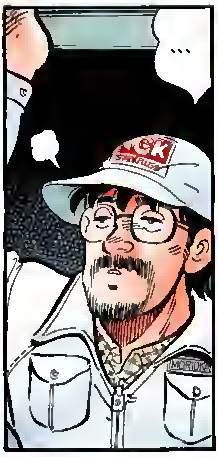
CRACK
...has some loose screws.
This guy...
SHIT!
HIZIR


You started it!
That's one helluva stunt you pulled!
Shut up! You rammed my tire!
YAK
YAK
YAK
YAK
SMACK
THUNK
Who the hell throws things on the circuit!? It doesn't happen!
You wanna die or what!?
CRACK
WHACK
Somebody call an official!
YAK YAK
Sir Gunma!
What a night-mare.
Oh god...

Chapter 9:
The Pledge

CHIRP
CHIRP
Morioka Motors
SONY

Morning. Still pretty cold, isn't it?
Hello.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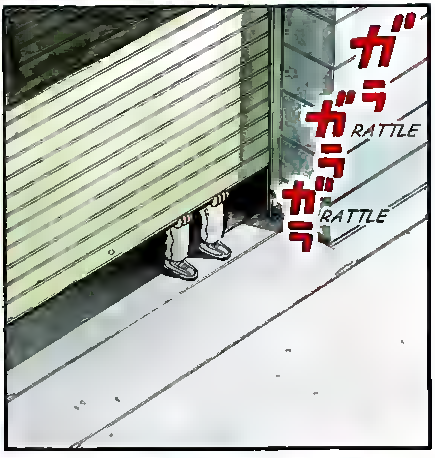
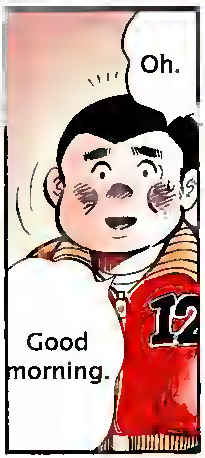
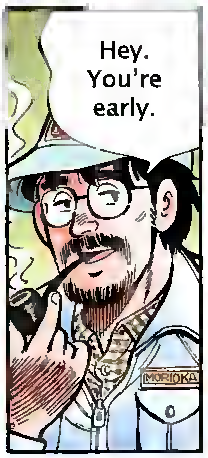

ガラ
ガラガラ
RATTLE
RATTLE


Oh.
Good morning.


Hey. You're early.

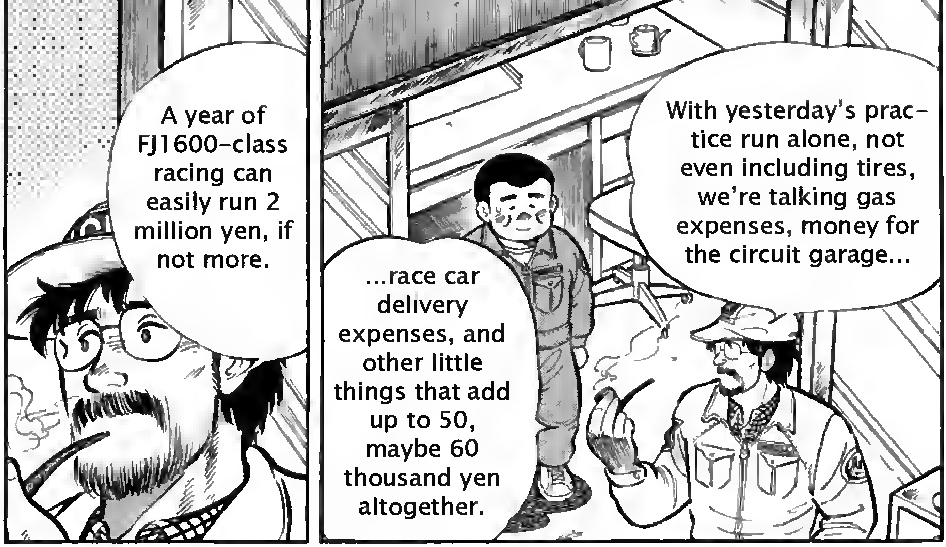
...

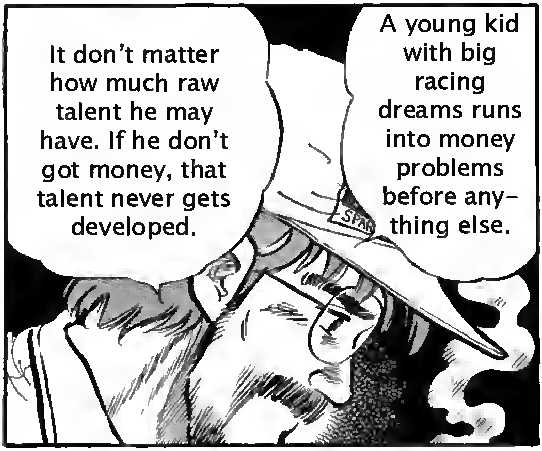
So excited that he's probably still asleep, no?
Gunma seemed pretty excited about it.
NGK
SPARK PLUGS
Here's some coffee.
How was that practice run yesterday?
He's in the hospi-tal.
Nope ...
Poor kid.
What? So a motorbike smashed his left foot, huh?
What?
...
And then...
Well, he used his right foot on the clutch to drive.
TING
TING
TING
So he wasn't able to practice?

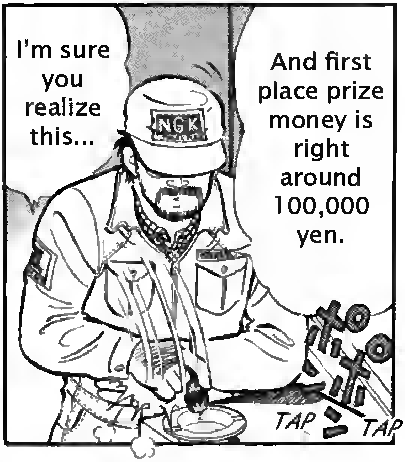
While driving the circuit?
That's uh... really some-thing... you mean...
Yup ...
He threw a shoe...!?
NGK
SPOOT
SLUMP
It hit a driver named Sunai right in the face.
And that's not all. He threw his helmet after that.
An official came to break it up, which was all well and good.
...
After that, all hell broke loose.
...

But somebody stepped in.
Well, Gunma was about to get his circuit license revoked.
I'm sure the officials won't tolerate that for a second.
Then what happened?
NGK
MORIOKA
...named Hijiri.
He's an FJ racer...
TSUKUBA
OFFICI
Anyway, he stepped in to help.
I know him. He was champion last year, and the son of a doctor if I'm not mistaken.
Hijiri?
Hmm.
Nice guy, huh?
So they'll be contacting us after thinking about it.
Asked the official to hear the whole story before he takes the license away.
NGK

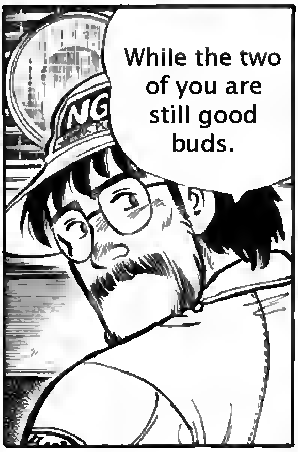
You let us borrow the truck, got that nice racing suit, and you've been watching over us...
Well, it's just that you've done so much for us...
I'm sorry...
That kid must have a few wires loose upstairs.
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
You got nothin' to be sorry about...
I enjoy it.
It's no trouble.
You got a lot of money?
...
But you'll have to come up with a lot of cash real soon, and if Gunma keeps acting like a monkey...
...things could get rough.

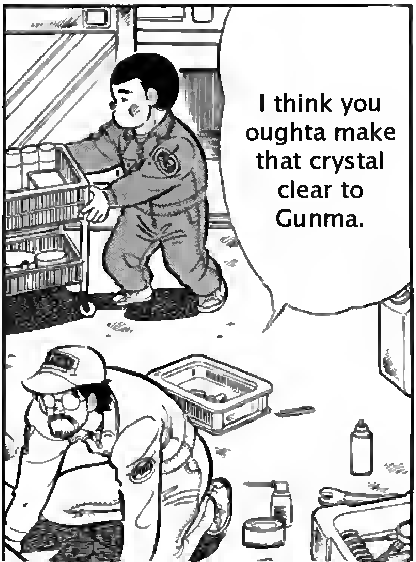

A year of FJ1600-class racing can easily run 2 million yen, if not more.
...race car delivery expenses, and other little things that add up to 50, maybe 60 thousand yen altogether.
With yesterday's practice run alone, not even including tires, we're talking gas expenses, money for the circuit garage...

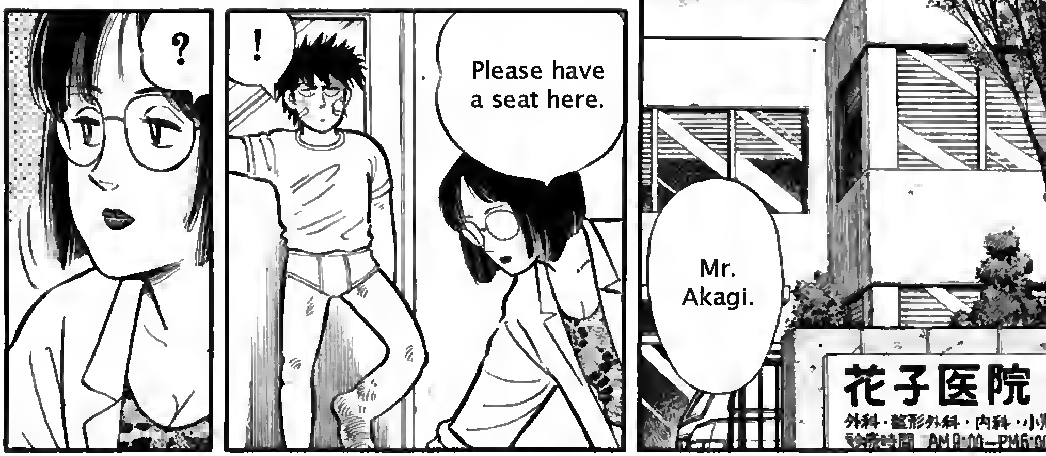

It don't matter how much raw talent he may have. If he don't got money, that talent never gets developed.
A young kid with big racing dreams runs into money problems before anything else.

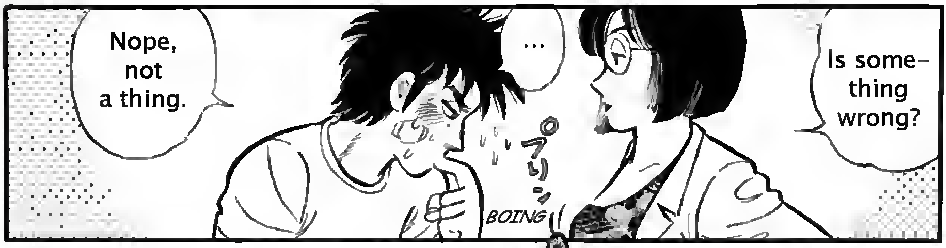

I'm sure you realize this...
NGK
And first place prize money is right around 100,000 yen.
TAP
TAP

...


While the two of you are still good buds.


I think you oughta make that crystal clear to Gunma.


?
!
Please have a seat here.
Mr. Akagi.
花子医院

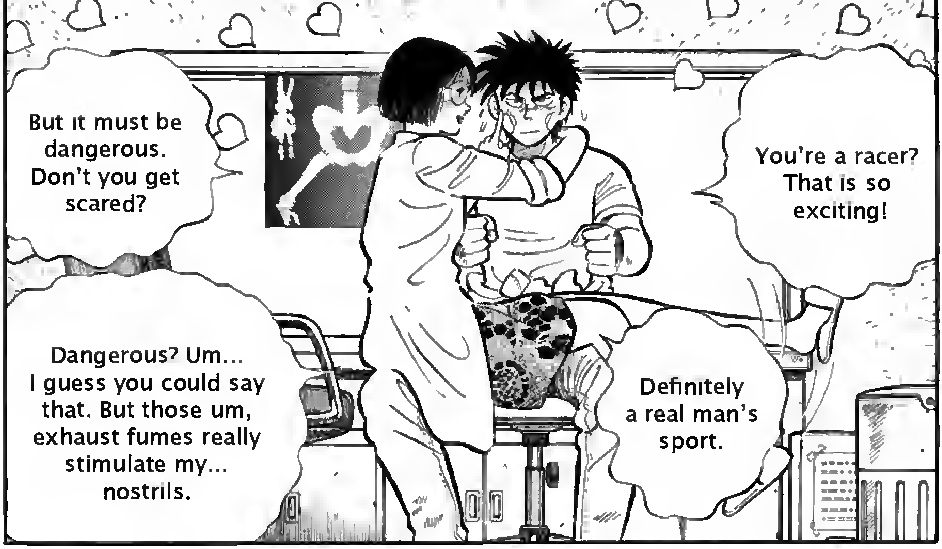

Nope, not a thing.
…
Is some-thing wrong?
プリン
BOING

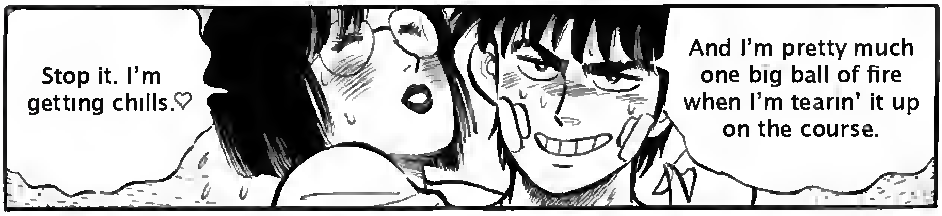
One more.
FLASH

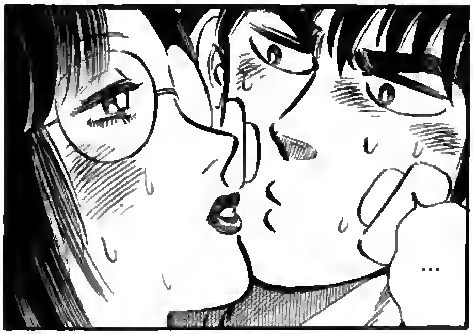
Hold still while I take some X-rays.
…
BOING

Eh heh.
SLIDE
FLASH

Peace.
The bones in your foot are fine.
Weird.
It didn't show up.
...
受付
Reception
Even when it's hard...
Whoa, so they call it a boner, but there's no bones in it...
What could be taking so long?
Phew ...


But it must be dangerous. Don't you get scared?
You're a racer? That is so exciting!
Dangerous? Um... I guess you could say that. But those um, exhaust fumes really stimulate my... nostrils.
Definitely a real man's sport.


Stop it. I'm getting chills.♡
And I'm pretty much one big ball of fire when I'm tearin' it up on the course.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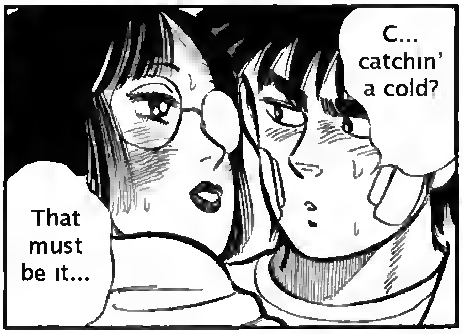
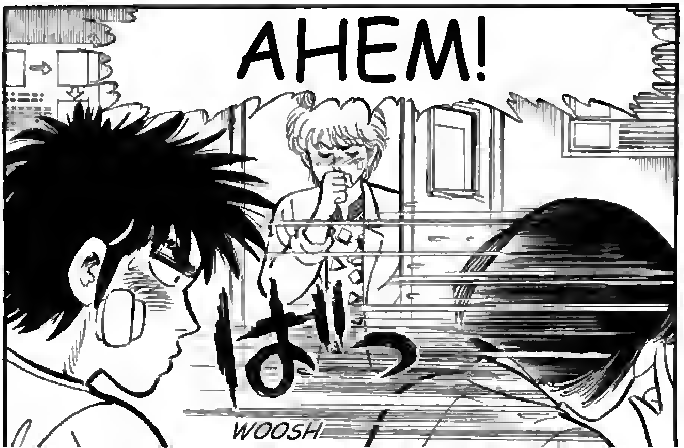

C... catchin' a cold?
That must be it...

Your bones are fine. I'll prescribe a pain killer. Next please!


AHEM!
はっ
WOOSH

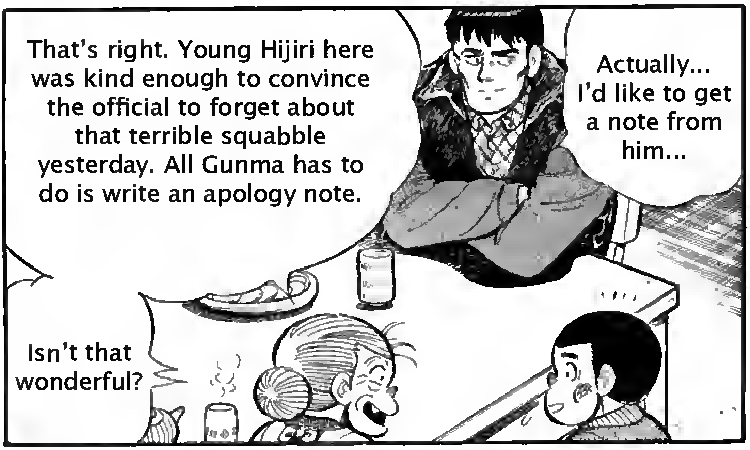
Auntie asked me to take you here, so I'm late for work!
I don't have that kind of time to waste!
I swear, you've got some nerve!
Do you know how long I was waiting!?
Hey, don't I get a ride?
One big ball of fire!?
And what's with that corny line!?
...
SCREECH
Go to work for once! I feel sorry for Tamotsu doing everything alone!
And one more thing!
VRR VRR VROOM
Ridiculous!
Your bones are fine, you can walk!
KUSHUK
Junko!

Just one little fight and everyone's been on my case since yesterday!
Sheesh, stupid chick.
HOP
HOP
SLIP
Once I win, everyone'll see what a genius I am.
Just gotta win. Just gotta win.
LIMP
LIMP
JO JO...
ROLLLL
I'll win it all. Just watch me.
Oww-w...

!?
...
I'm home, Auntie.
CREAK
12
HA-HA-HA...
Muh... Mr. Hijiri!!
Hello.
Good timing, Tamotsu.
This young man was waiting for you.

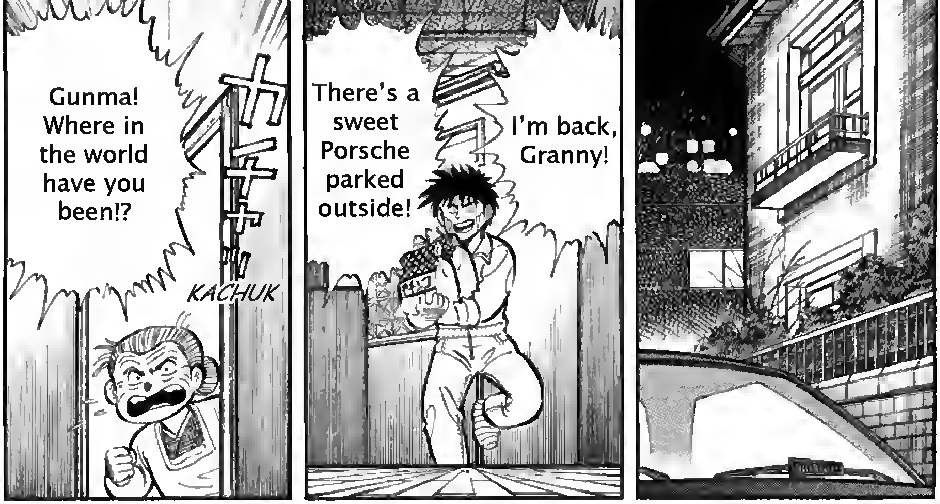
Where could that Gunma be...?
Sorry ...
He's been waiting for nearly two hours now.

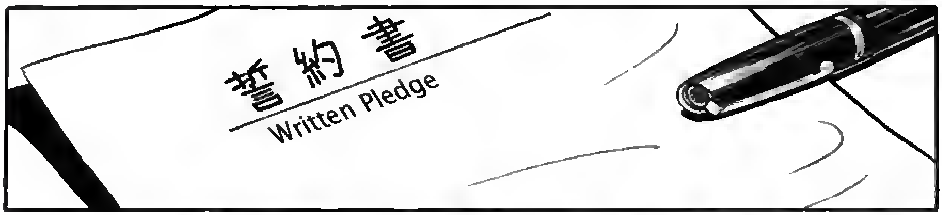
Hijiri here has been telling me all about racing.
That Gunma still hasn't come back from the hospital.

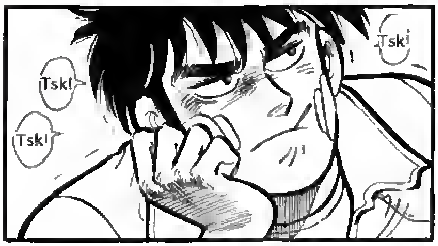

Isn't that wonderful?
That's right. Young Hijiri here was kind enough to convince the official to forget about that terrible squabble yesterday. All Gunma has to do is write an apology note.
Actually... I'd like to get a note from him...

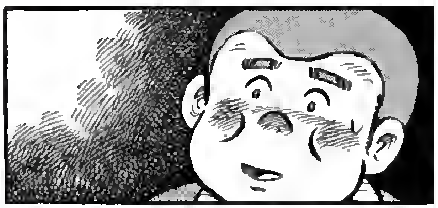
Mr. Hijiri...
Isn't that thought-ful?
It would also leave a good impression for the official...

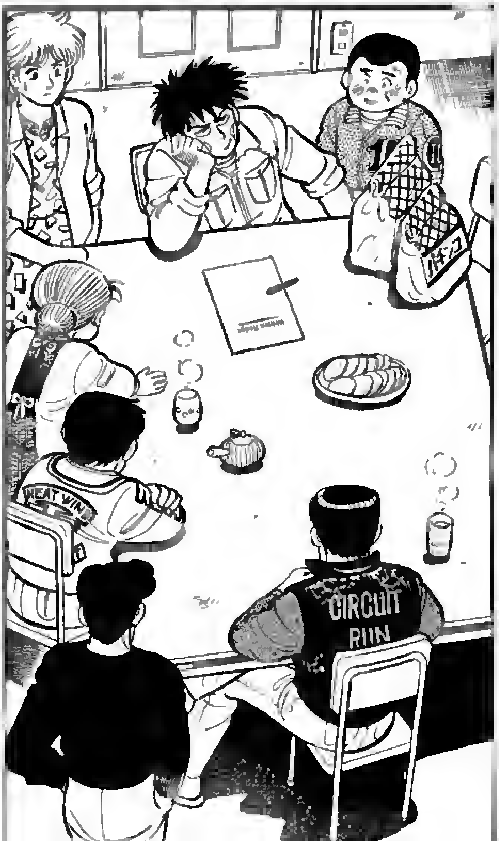
There's no rush...
Just thought the sooner the better, for Gunma's sake...

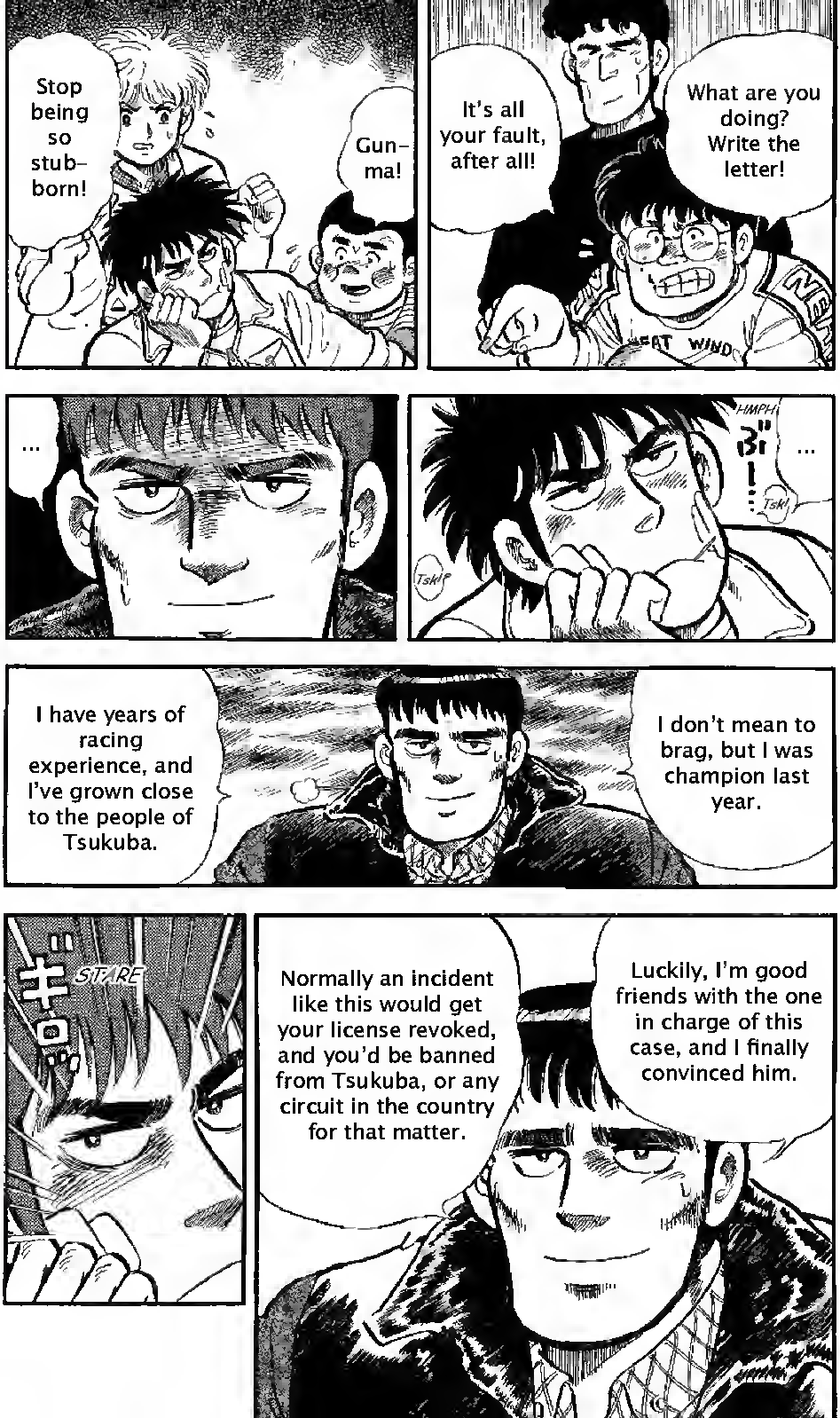

Gunma! Where in the world have you been!?
KACHUK
There's a sweet Porsche parked outside!
I'm back, Granny!


誓約書
Written Pledge


Tsk!
Tsk!
Tsk!



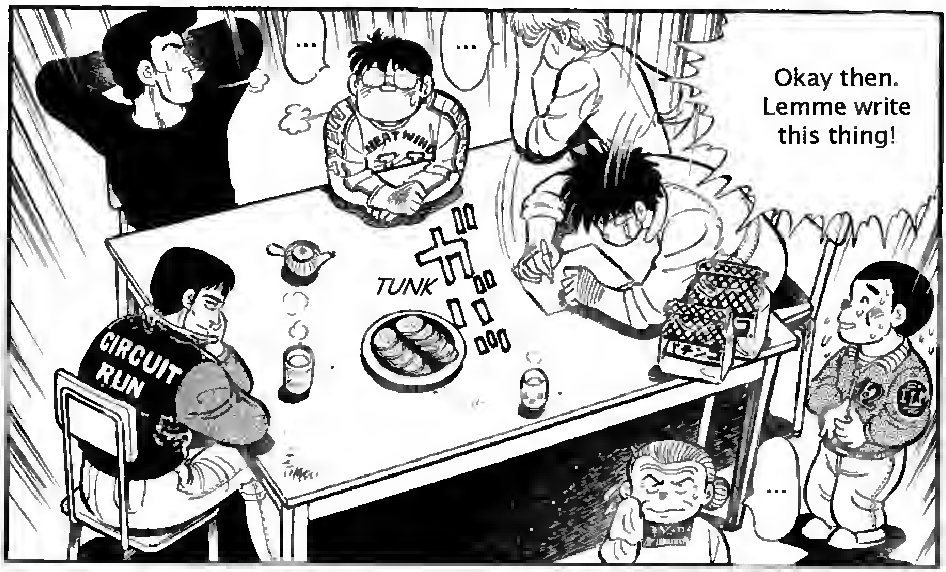

CIRCUIT RUN


Stop being so stub-born!
Gun-ma!
It's all your fault, after all!
What are you doing? Write the letter!
...
HMPH
...
TSK!
TSK!
I have years of racing experience, and I've grown close to the people of Tsukuba.
I don't mean to brag, but I was champion last year.
STARE
Normally an incident like this would get your license revoked, and you'd be banned from Tsukuba, or any circuit in the country for that matter.
Luckily, I'm good friends with the one in charge of this case, and I finally convinced him.

If he didn't write one, how come I've gotta do it...?
Well... no...
Sunai?
Did Sunai write a letter?
Sunai did get off pretty easy, I'd say. But you did start it after all.
You've got to be kidding!
Well...
...
How come I'm the only one who's gotta write a letter?
Then he was all pissed off that I caught up with him on the circuit.
I greeted him like a gentleman at the restaurant, but he hit me.
Wrong. Sunai started the whole thing!
He rammed his tire into mine, tryin' to force me off the course.

What's your angle for acting so nice? You must want something.
And one more thing.
I never asked you for nothin', but you're going overboard to help me out.
...!
I see your point. If that's true, I'll have Sunai write one too.
THUD
Damn straight!
...
A rare talent like me comes but once every hundred years or so, and you don't want me out of the racing world for some little thing like this. When I win the F1 championship in the future, you wanna brag to all your friends that you and me are best buds, right?
Wait a minute, you figured out I'm a genius. That's it, isn't it?

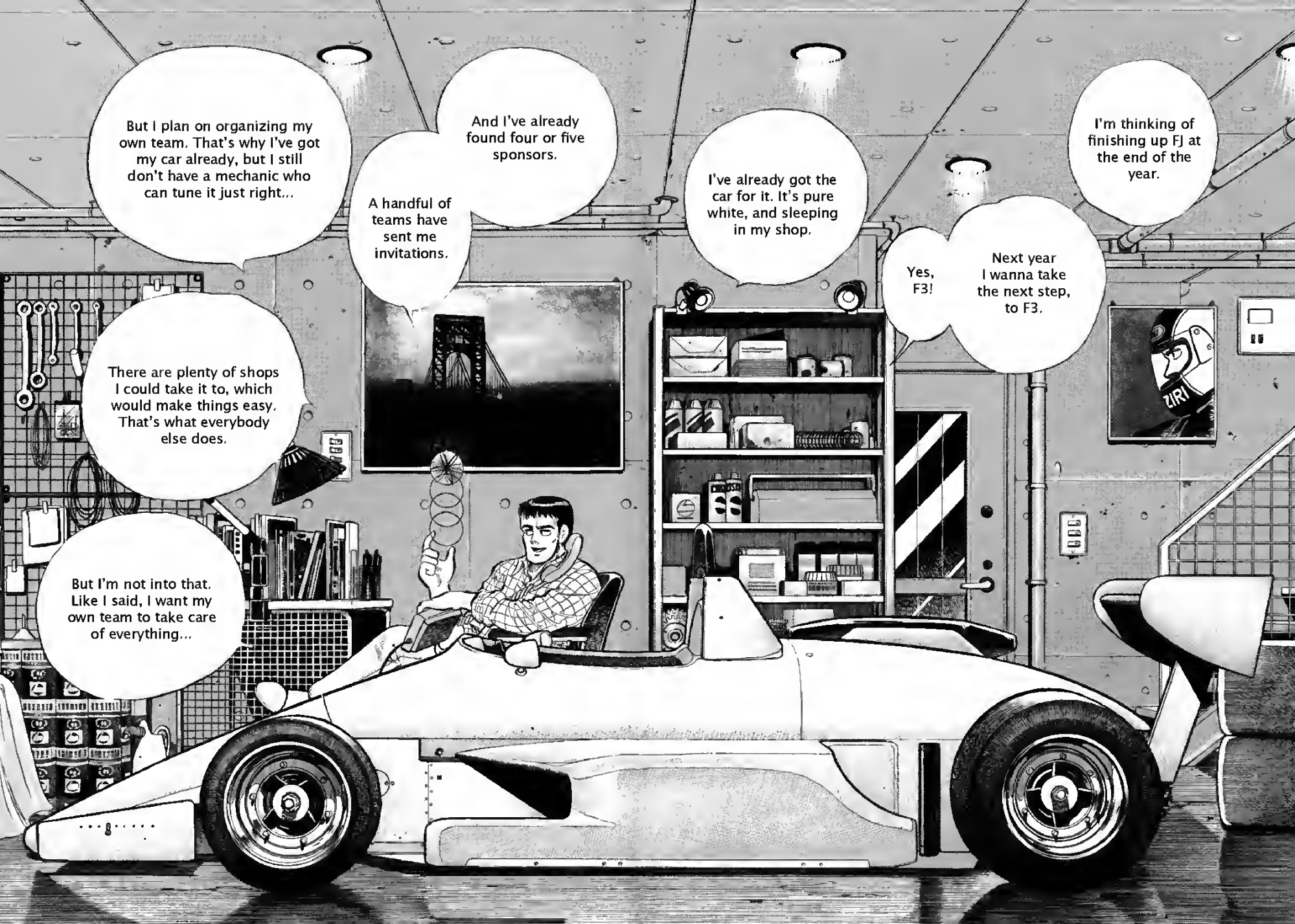
Well, that's pretty much it.
...


...
...
Okay then. Lemme write this thing!
TUNK
CIRCUIT RUN
...

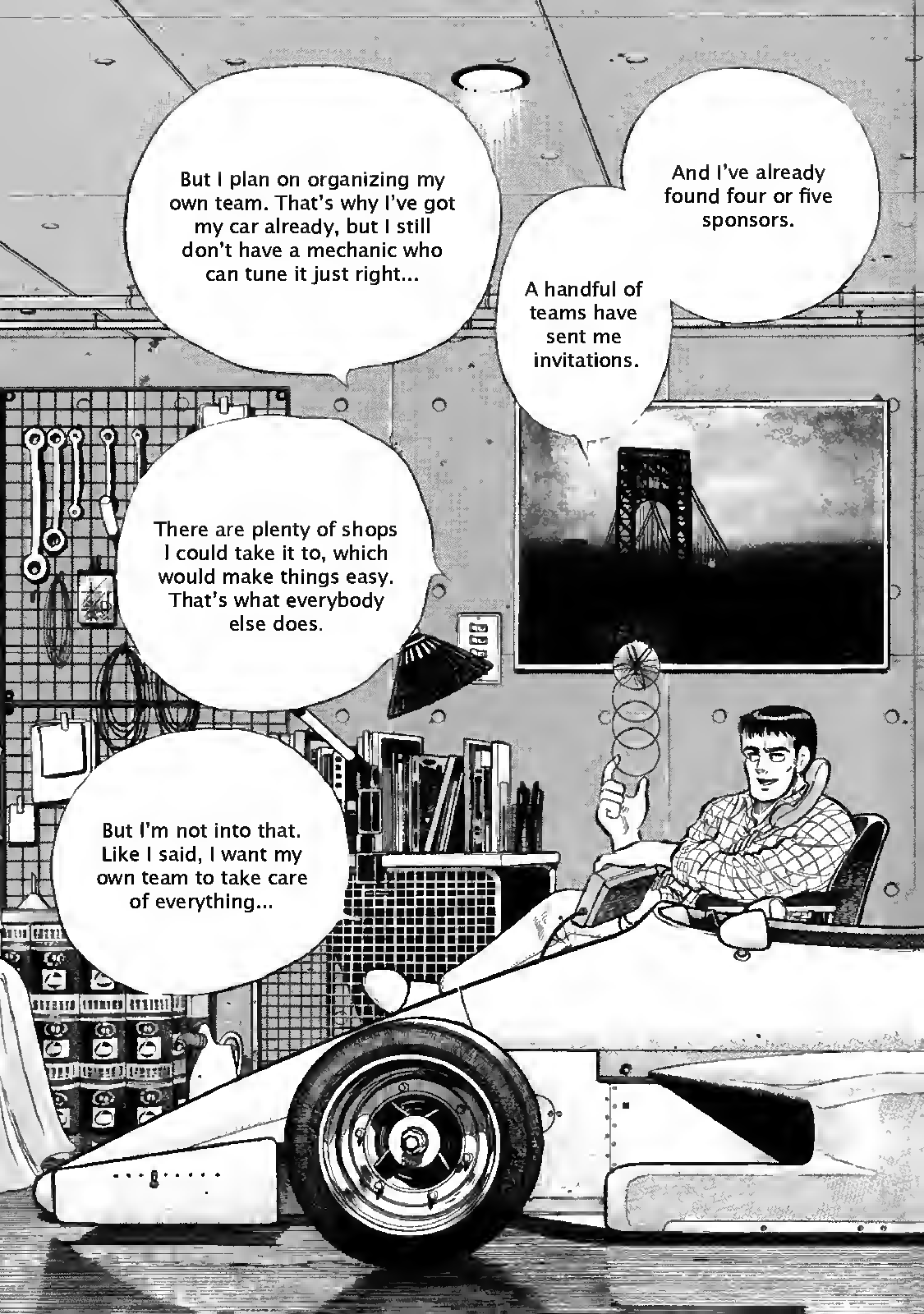
...
How can we ever thank you for this?

12
I saw your car.
CIRCU
RI
I'd like it if we could be friends!
Yesterday, I went head to head with Gunma on purpose, and he drove the same speed as me on the straightaway.
The one Gunma was racing in.
CIRCUIT RUN
An old used car like that has to be tuned pretty well for that kind of speed.
...
12

Chapter 10: Fellowship


But I plan on organizing my own team. That's why I've got my car already, but I still don't have a mechanic who can tune it just right...
And I've already found four or five sponsors.
A handful of teams have sent me invitations.
I've already got the car for it. It's pure white, and sleeping in my shop.
I'm thinking of finishing up FJ at the end of the year.
Yes, F3!
Next year I wanna take the next step, to F3.
There are plenty of shops I could take it to, which would make things easy. That's what everybody else does.
But I'm not into that. Like I said, I want my own team to take care of everything...

I've already got the car for it. It's pure white, and sleeping in my shop.
Yes, F3!
Next year I wanna take the next step, to F3.
I'm thinking of finishing up FJ at the end of the year.
ZIRI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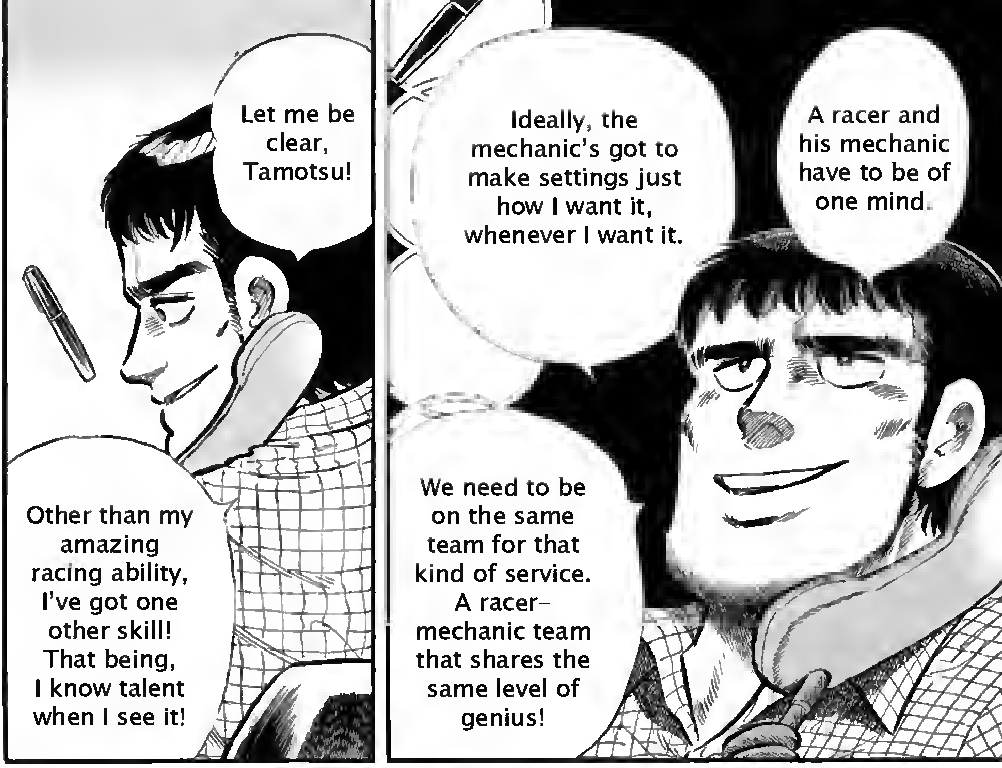
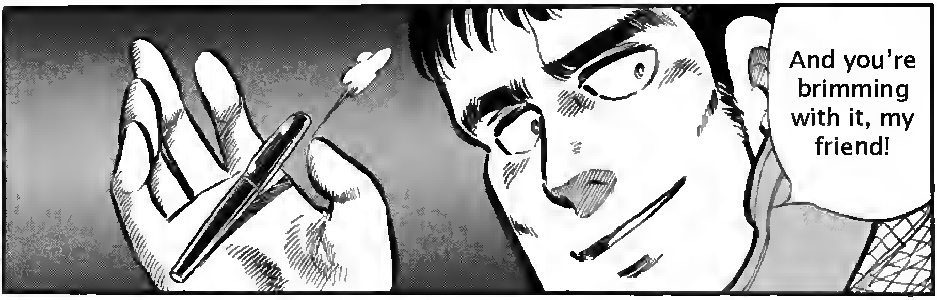
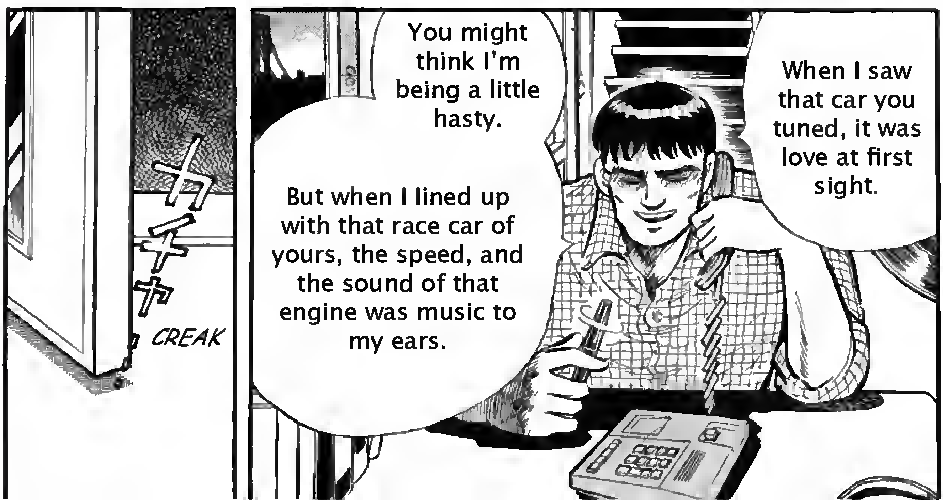
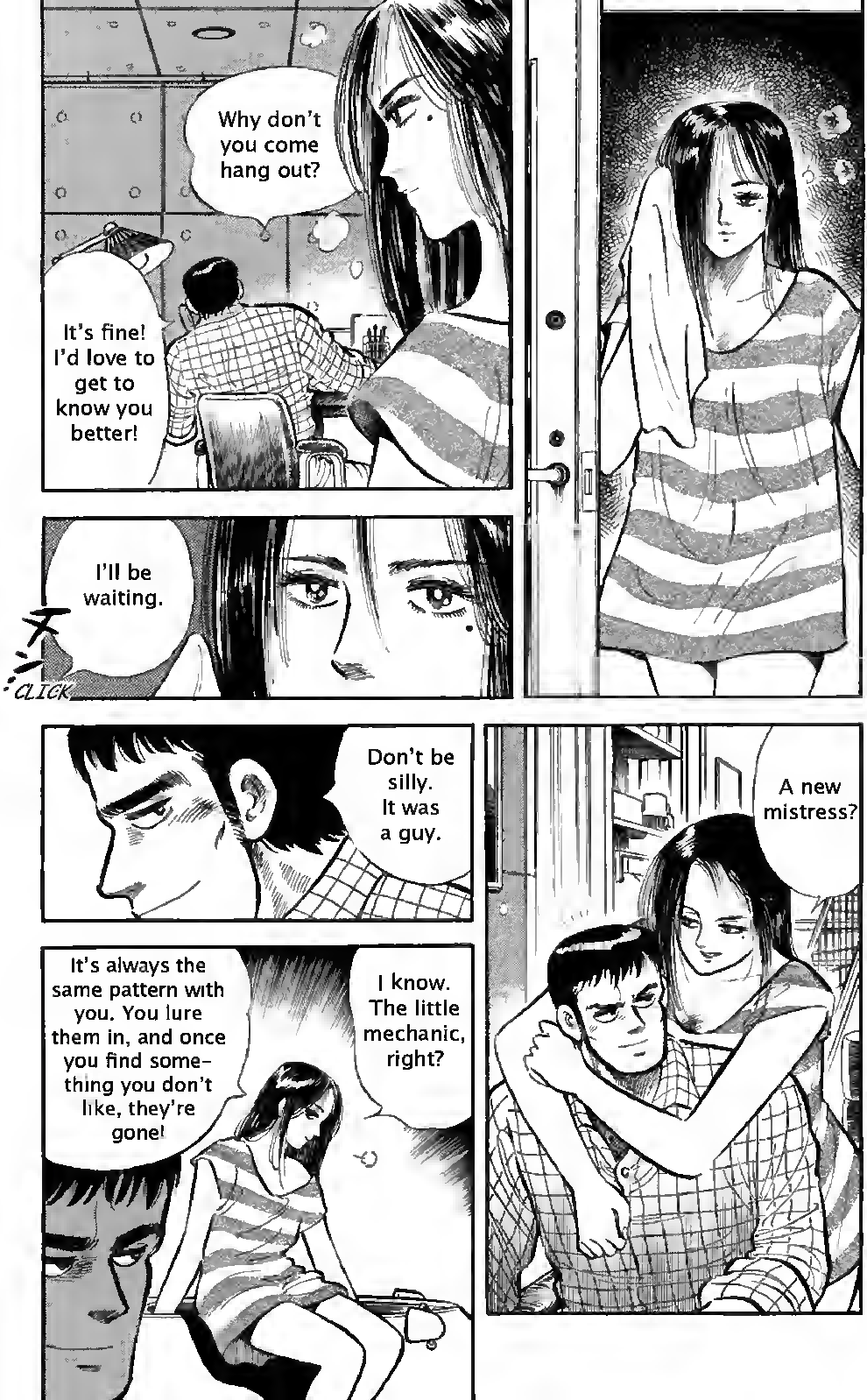

Let me be clear, Tamotsu!
Other than my amazing racing ability, I've got one other skill! That being, I know talent when I see it!
Ideally, the mechanic's got to make settings just how I want it, whenever I want it.
A racer and his mechanic have to be of one mind.
We need to be on the same team for that kind of service. A racer–mechanic team that shares the same level of genius!


And you're brimming with it, my friend!


CREAK
You might think I'm being a little hasty.
But when I lined up with that race car of yours, the speed, and the sound of that engine was music to my ears.
When I saw that car you tuned, it was love at first sight.


Why don't you come hang out?
It's fine! I'd love to get to know you better!
I'll be waiting.
CLICK
Don't be silly. It was a guy.
A new mistress?
It's always the same pattern with you. You lure them in, and once you find something you don't like, they're gone!
I know. The little mechanic, right?

You're so aggres-sive.
SLIP
I wanna see him go to work first.
I dunno.
The kid?
What do you think of this one?
This feels so nice and cool.
Ahhh...
CLICK
You're sick.
Hmph.
Start up the engine.
Hey.

That's right
Just like you.

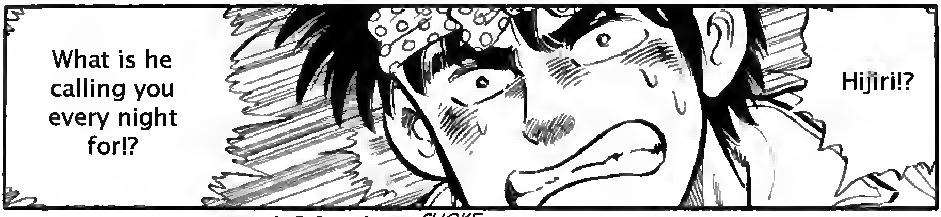
He actually has one.
A car for F3...
Bad move betting 10 on that one!
Had enough yet, Granny?
Read 'em and weep!
Wow ...
...
She doesn't know when to quit, Tamotsu! Check this out!
Of course not! One more time!

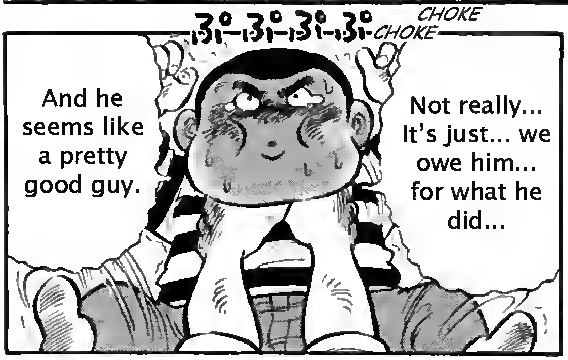
Hey, who was on the phone?
SHUFFLE
...
Okay, okay.
Just deal me a hand, Gunma!
THUD
I'm bet-ting it all this time!
You're sure gettin' a lot of phone calls lately!
PUK
This time I'll get it!
There we go!
Six, seven, and eight wins me three times my bet!
Woohoo! What a come-back!
You sure about that, Granny?
TAK
Bring it on!
GRRRR

Let go of me, Gunma.
It was just Hijiri.

Hmph. Sore loser.

Who are you chattin' with on the phone every night!? You got a girl-friend I don't know about!?
Out with it, Tamotsu!

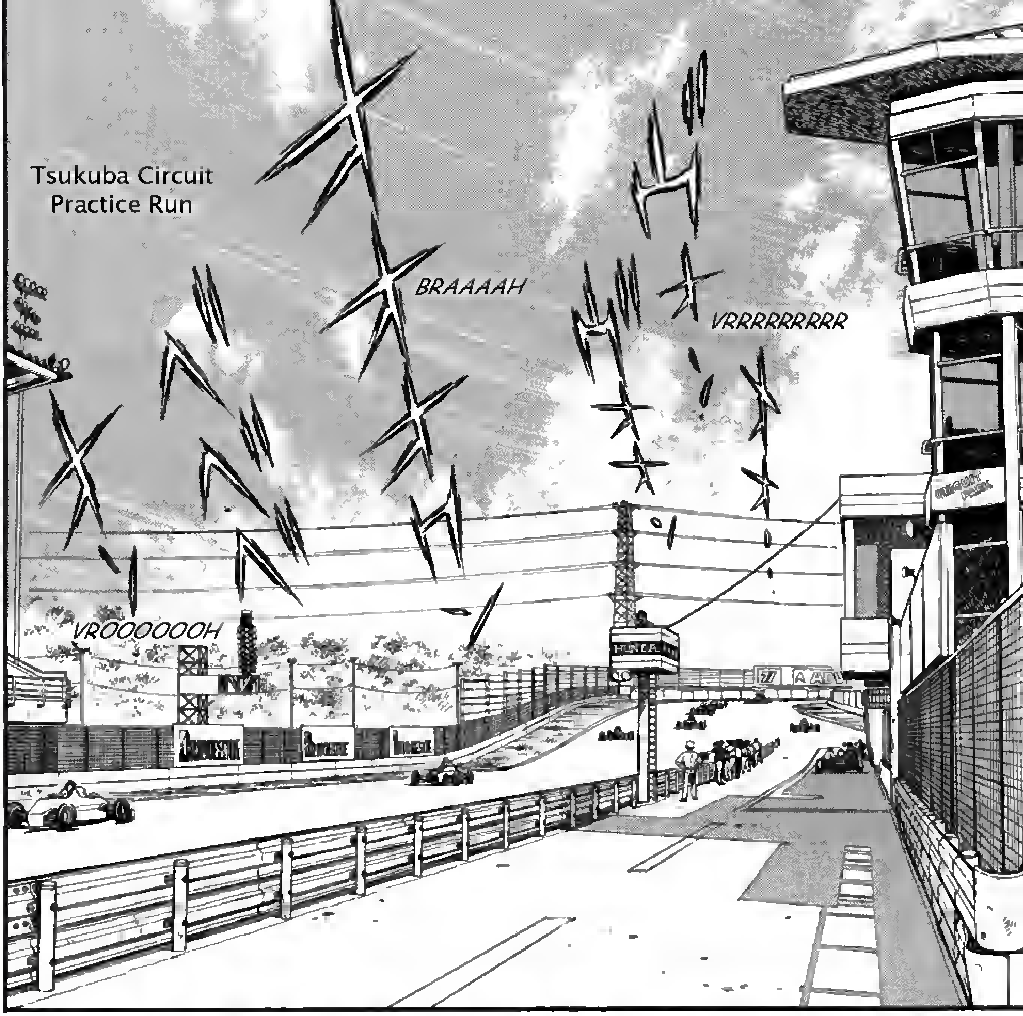

What is he calling you every night for!?
Hijiri!?

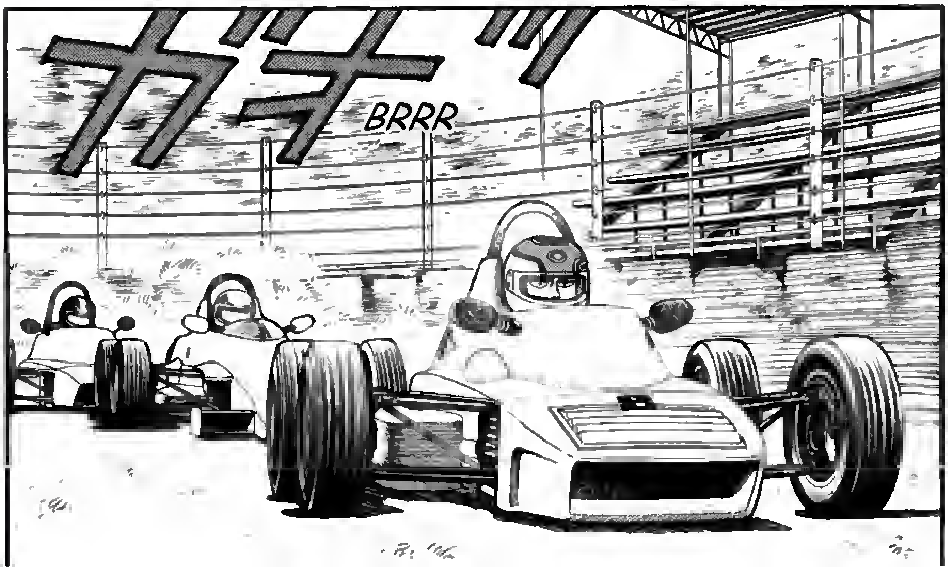

CHOKE
CHOKE
And he seems like a pretty good guy.
Not really... It's just... we owe him... for what he did...

THUNK
Okay, okay.
What are you doin', Granny? Deal me a hand!

He just likes our race car, and told me about his future plans.
Nothing important really.
KRRRRRR
Oh yeah? You seem awful chummy with him!

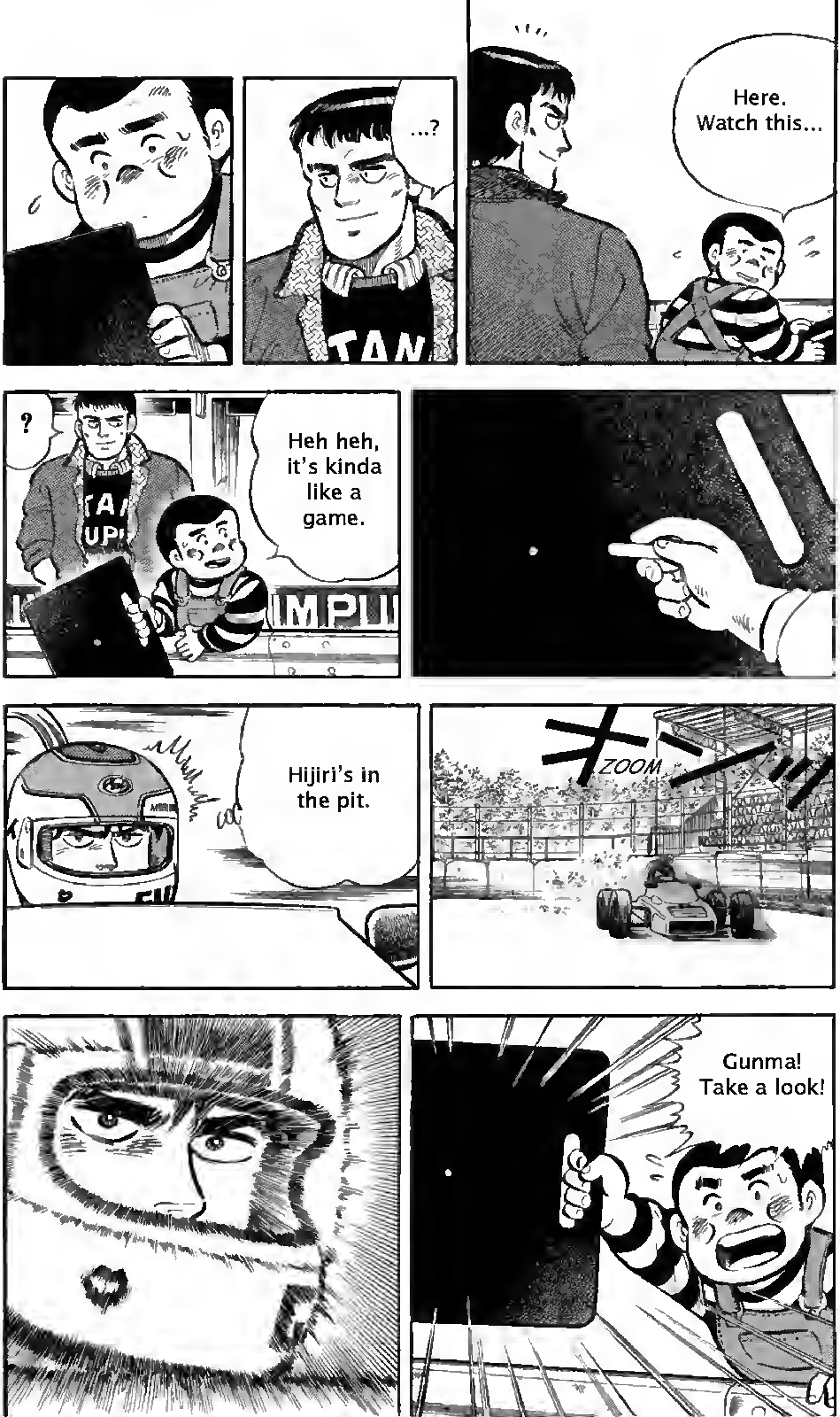
Our debut race.
I was thinking of signing us up for the third race in May.
Anyway Gunma ...
We gotta get through the required amount of practice before
!
!
Even if he don't get first place, he's gotta get at least fifth.
Otherwise, my savings ain't enough to pay for the next race.
That's the spirit.
I'll get the top spot in our big debut!
You just leave that to me, buddy!
SNAP

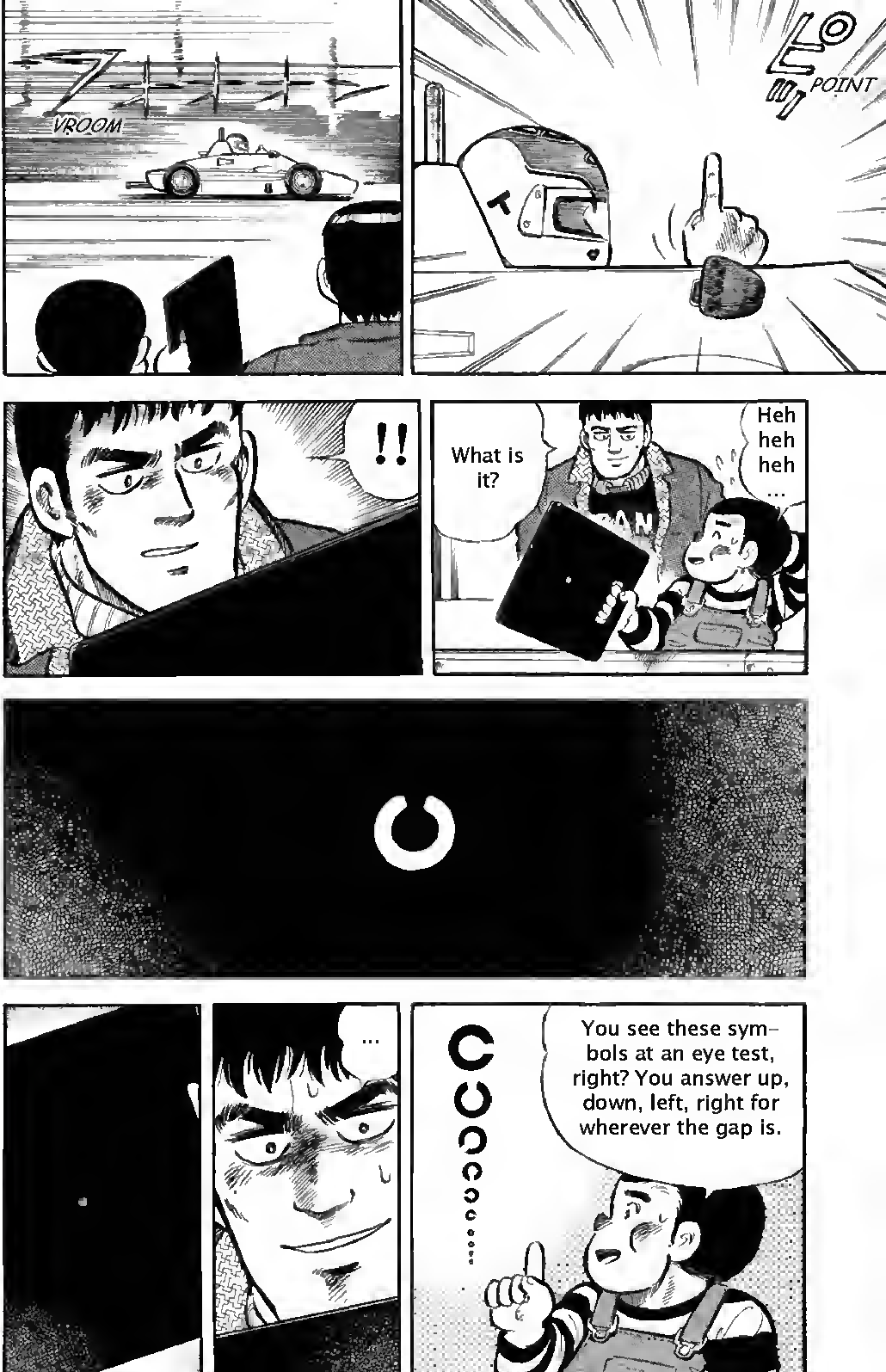

Tsukuba Circuit
Practice Run
BRAAAAH
VRRRRRRRRR
VROOOOOOH

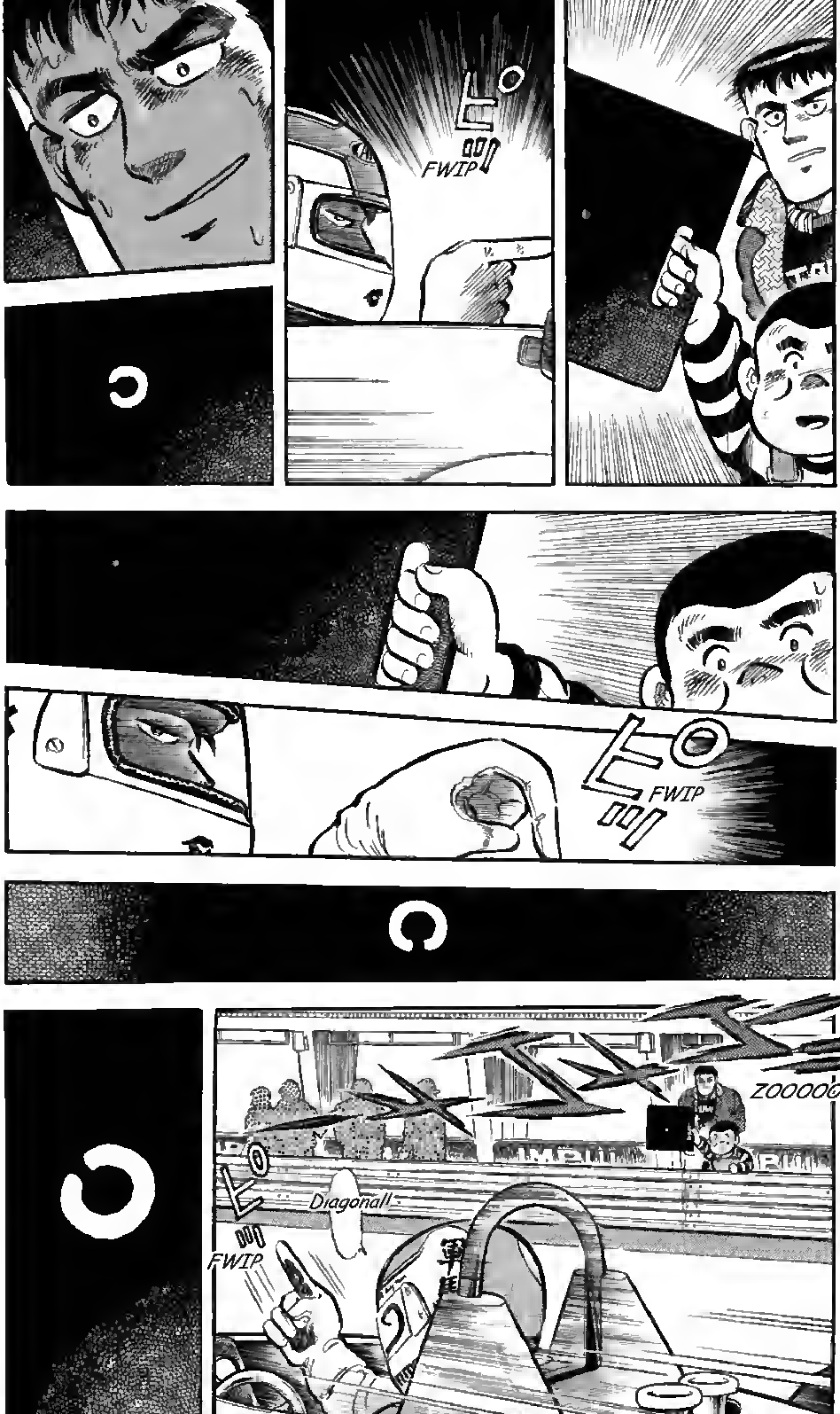

ガチ
BRRR

ZOOM
How come Hijiri and Sunai ain't here?
VROOOH
Hmph.
Oh, Mr. Hijiri!!
I love that sound.
I'm 18, like Gunma.
You're still under 20, aren't you Tamotsu?
The sweet sound of engines purring as they move through the straightaway, hairpins, S-curve, and that last corner. Music to my ears.
That's really some-thing.
Wow!
But the tuning's got to be nearly perfect to get that sound.

What a shame.
Engine parts were like toys to me when I was a youngin.
My pops... My father was a freelance mechanic.
It's really a waste of your talent.
Such a nice race car to be driven by the likes of Gunma.
He's obviously not cut out to be a racer.
Ha ha ha. Really?
はっはっはっ
HA HA HA
Sorry to speak poorly of your friend.
Gunma's got plenty of talent though.
It's okay...

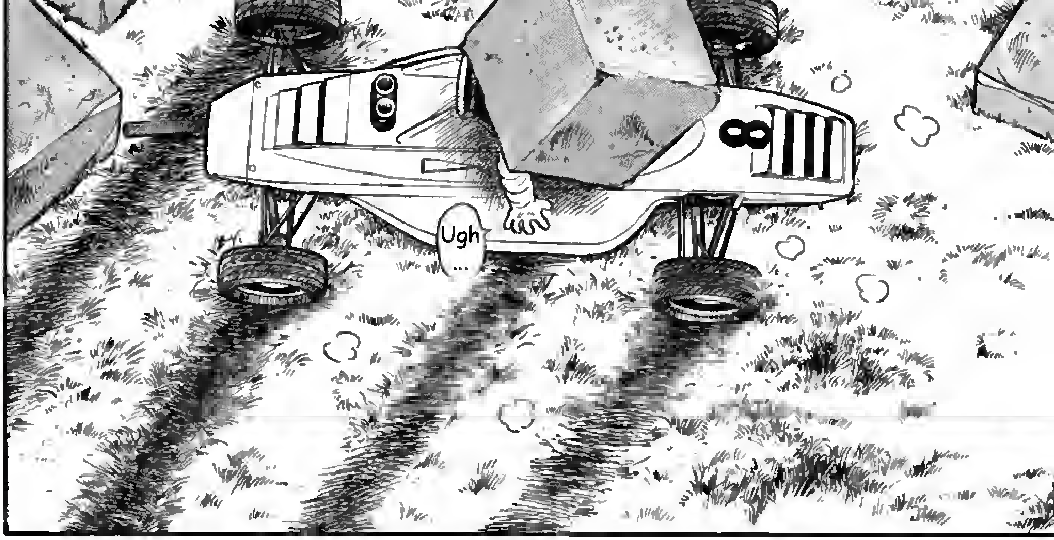

...?
Here.
Watch this...
?
Heh heh,
it's kinda
like a
game.
Hijiri's in
the pit.
ZOOM
Gunma!
Take a look!

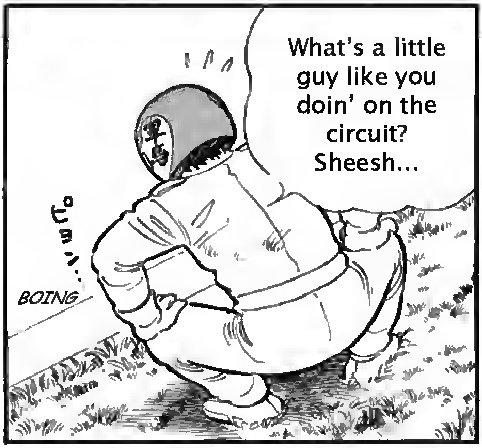

VROOM
POINT
!!
What is it?
Heh heh heh ...
C
...
C C C C C C ....
You see these symbols at an eye test, right? You answer up, down, left, right for wherever the gap is.


FWIP
FWIP
ZOOOOOM
Diagonal!
FWIP

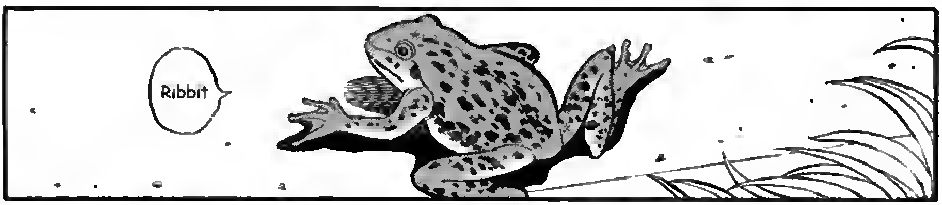
...and we'd try to read those ads posted on the train passing by.
Back in the country, we used to lay out on the river bank...
I get it. He's got impressive vision.
?
SHOOOH
Weekly Post, Seiko Matsuda's Shocking Marriage, New Testimony in the Miura Case, Tokyo Bathhouse Information...
Um, Matsu... Matsu...?
The train was running across a steel bridge some 50 meters away.
I made you mad, didn't I?
...

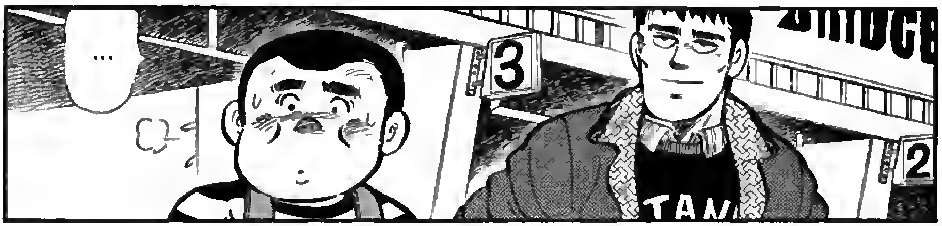
Sorry bud... I gotta run.
I'm not mad, Mr. Hijiri...
None taken.
No offense, okay?
Sorry I said those things about Gunma.
I'd like to go to your place if that's okay...
I um...
Um, Mr. Hijiri...?
And I'd like to make friends with people in the racing world.
Sure would like to see your F3 car.
WHOA
You're more than welcome!
...


Ugh
...


What's a little guy like you doin' on the circuit? Sheesh...
BOING

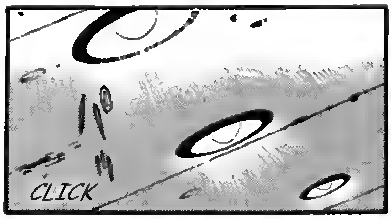
Jumping out in the road like that!?
What were you thinking!?
SHUK

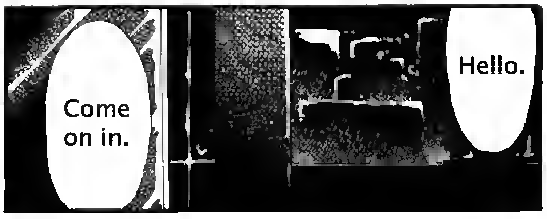

Ribbit

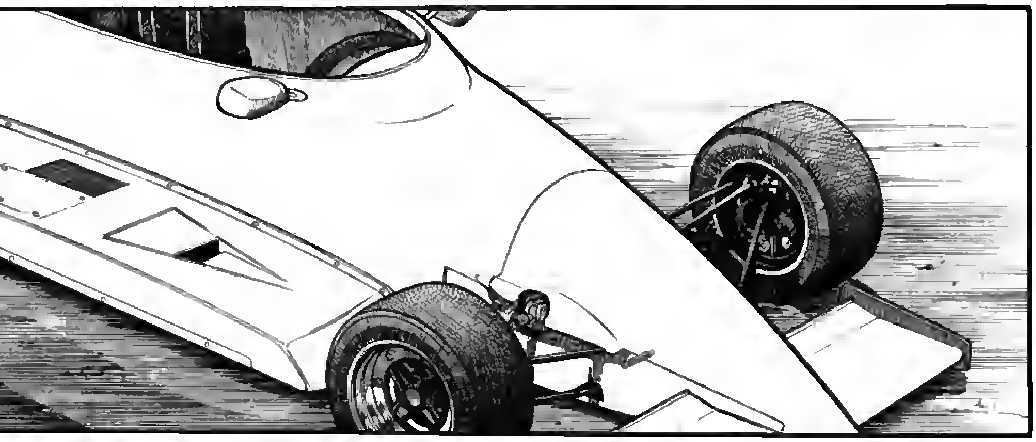

...
3
2

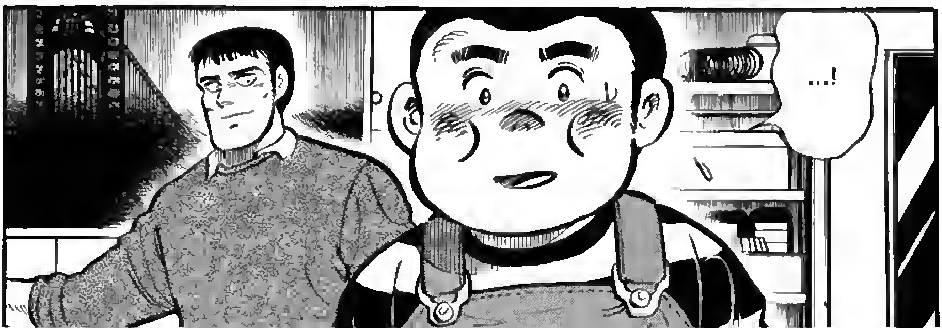
That's right.
And even those practice races cost money, don't they?
ミシャアアア
SPLISHHHH
They've been practicing a lot lately.
Yes, their big "debut race" is coming up.
...
Racing requires a lot of money, after all...
He's been working late into the night for days, and he's still not back yet.
That poor Tamotsu.
He's asleep.
What about Gunma?
カチャ
CLANK
Urrr-gh...

Mumble mumble...
クイ
FWOO
クイ
FWOO
Ugh ...
Uh...
Heh... Nobody... And I mean nobody...
Mumble ...
Mum- ble...


CLICK


Come on in.
Hello.

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"F" Volume 2 THE END

F VOL.2

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ROKUDA NOBORU

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